STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001248 – 6985 ISLAND HIGHWAY N

Applicant: DISTRICT DEVELOPMENTS CORP.

Architect: DARYOUSH FIROUZLI ARCHITECTURE INC.

Owners: NORTH GROVE (2) NOMINEE LTD.

Landscape Architect: DURANTE KREUK LTD.

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT:

Zoning	Woodgrove Urban Centre (CC4)
Location	The subject property is located at the north boundary of the City and is bounded by the Nanaimo Parkway on the southwest property line and Island Highway N on the northeast property line.
Total Area	1.17ha
Official Community Plan (OCP)	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plans – Woodgrove Urban Node; Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 4 – Nanaimo Parkway Design; 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 Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines.

The subject property is located at the north boundary of the City and is in close proximity to multiple shopping centers. The property is bounded by the Nanaimo Parkway along the southwest property line, and the Island Highway N along the northeast property line. The proposed development is Phase 2 of a two-phase multi-family residential development. Phase 1 (6975 Island Highway N) consisted of 146 rental units within three buildings, and shares its western property line with the proposed development site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The subject property is approximately 1.17ha in size. The CC4 zone allows a floor area ratio (FAR) of 1.25, and the proposed FAR for Phase 2 is 0.99 with a gross floor area (GFA) of 11,665m^2 within two five-storey buildings. Phase 2 includes 149 rental units divided between two buildings (5,811m^2 in Building A and 5,854m^2 in Building B) with underground parking and a mix of the following unit types:

Unit Type	***Number of Units***	***Approximate Unit Sizes***
Two bedroom and den	3	90m^2
Two bedroom	44	80m^2
One bedroom and den	44	70m^2
One bedroom	45	60m^2
Studio	13	44m^2
Total	**149 units**	

Site Design

The site design consists of two five-storey buildings sited parallel to the northeast and southwest property lines, fronting both highways. Site access is from an internal drive aisle that is shared between Phases 1 and 2, and is accessed by a right-in/right-out egress from the Island Highway. Surface parking areas are located between Buildings A and B, and on the north and south side of Building B. Underground parking is provided beneath both buildings, with access from the northwest corner of the site. A total of 176 parking stalls are provided as part of Phase 2, with 98 of the stalls above ground.

The primary building entrances face the internal parking area. A central, shared park is located at the southeast corner of Building B, which was designed as part of Phase 1 and connects pedestrian walkways between each building and the two phases. Long-term bicycle storage will be provided within the buildings. An outdoor refuse receptacle enclosure is proposed in the northwest corner of the site.

Staff Comments:

- The internal drive aisle, park, and pedestrian connections create a sense of neighbourhood identity between Phases 1 and 2.
- Consider raising the pedestrian connections on-site to provide emphasis from the drive aisles and create a safer experience for pedestrians on-site.
- Identify the visitor parking stalls on-site.
- Add a direct pedestrian connection between the northeast corner of Building B and southwest corner of Building A, as well as from the parking area on the north side of Building B to either building.
- The refuse receptacle enclosure is not easily accessible or linked by a direct pedestrian connection from each building. Consider moving the receptacles inside the underground parking structures, or to a more central location.
- The proposed development requires a total of 147 parking stalls. Remove all surface parking spaces in excess of this number, in favour of providing more open space or amenity areas.

Building Design

Each building is contemporary in design with a flat roof and small overhang, and a maximum height of 18.28m. Exterior materials include Hardie plank, faux wood cladding, cement composite, veneer brick, black vinyl windows, and aluminum railings for the patios and decks. The proposed materials and colour palette are consistent with Phase 1 of the development; however, the building design is varied for Phase 2.

The main building entrances are emphasized by projecting canopies with wood accents. Each upper unit has its own deck, which are recessed into the façade with the railings projecting out from the building faces to provide articulation to all sides of the buildings. A vertical detail is added in between the fourth and fifth floors to breakup the massing. The upper floor corners of the buildings are emphasized by a material change and decks that wrap around the building. The Hardie plank and cement composite cladding are differing sizes, providing further interest to the design.

Staff Comments:

- Provide differentiation in exterior materials between the two buildings to ensure a unique identity.
- Explore ways to better connect the east elevation of Building A to the street in order to create a presence at the site entrance (i.e. further extend the balconies around the corners, or consider a material change/emphasis).
- Consider adding an entrance to the south side of Building B to provide access to the parking area, and consider providing a more direct pedestrian connection between the parking area and the main entrance of Building B.
- Ensure adequate screening of any rooftop mechanical equipment.

Landscape Design

The north, west, and south sides of the site are buffered by a generous landscape buffer, and the edge of the internal drive aisle will be planted with street trees. The edge treatment consists of a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees. The site ground cover will consist of a hydroseeded pollinator mix and natural lawn with low plantings around the base of each building to provide separation for the private patio areas. Trees are interspersed among the central parking area of the site, providing shade to the parking areas.

Pedestrian walkways within the site will be surfaced with stamped, coloured asphalt and many parking stalls will be paved with a permeable surface. All private patios will be finished with pavers, and the entrances of each building have concrete “venetian cobble” pavers to emphasize the area. Low boulder and concrete retaining walls are used throughout the site. Short term bicycle storage is provided in front of both buildings. An amenity space is provided in front of Building B, adjacent to the shared park space, complete with benches, café seating, pavers, and a wooden trellis. Bollard lighting is provided throughout the site.

Staff Comments:

- A walking trail around the site perimeter was developed as part of Phase 1. Consider extending a perimeter walking trail through Phase 2, and integrate it with the proposed landscaping, to create a complete walking loop for the on-site residents.
- Provide a more robust planting of trees, shrubs and plants between the parking areas and pedestrian walkways and buidings to reduce glare from headlights and provide more separation between the public and private spaces.
- Explore ways to further expand the common green area (part of Phase 1) into Phase 2 to increase the landscaped areas and provide more outdoor amenity space. In addition, provide an outdoor amenity area within close proximity to Building A.
- Curb stops will be required for the parking stalls in front of landscaped areas.
- Consider surfacing the loading area with a permeable material.
- Consider placing the short-term bicycle storage areas under cover to provide weather protection.
- In accordance with the Urban Parkway Guidelines, the plant palette on the Nanaimo Parkway Edge should utilize deciduous street trees planted in formal rows and patterns, utilize ornamental and coniferous plant material for screening and to visually block unsightly uses such as parking and the refuse receptacle. The landscape plan should include more evergreen species among the Kwanzen cherry trees buffering the south parking area to ensure it will be screened from the highway throughout the year, and provide a landscape buffer around the outdoor refuse receptacle enclosure to ensure adequate screening as required by Part 17 of the Zoning Bylaw.

- Consider reconfiguring the parking areas or removing some of the excess parking stalls to provide more open space that could benefit from additional on-site outdoor amenity areas such as a community garden, or a fenced-in dog area.
- Provide plantings around the pad-mounted transformer at the south corner of Building A to screen it from view.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

Front Yard Setback

The minimum required front yard setback is 7.0m within the CC4 zone where there is no parking between the front property line and the front face of the building and where the property abuts a major road. A variance is requested to reduce the minimum front yard setback from 7.0m to 6.3m for the property line adjacent to the Island Highway. This represents a proposed variance of 0.7m.

Building Height

The maximum permitted building height in the CC4 zone is 14m. The applicant is proposing a building height of 18.28m in order to accommodate a reduced building footprint. This represents a proposed variance of 4.28m