

DATE OF MEETING January 17, 2022

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SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1208 –  
497 MENZIES RIDGE DRIVE

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration, a development permit application for a 22-unit multi-family townhouse development at 497 Menzies Ridge Drive.

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1208 at 497 Menzies Ridge Drive to permit a multi-family townhouse development with the following variances to:

- reduce the minimum landscape buffer requirement for the side and rear yard from 1.8m to 0m; and
- increase the maximum allowable fence height within the front yard setback from 1.2m to 2.8m for the proposed decorative arbours.

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1208, was received from Raymond de Beeld Architect Inc., on behalf of Menzies Ridge Estates Ltd. to permit a multi-family townhouse development at 497 Menzies Ridge Drive.

### **Subject Property and Site Context**

<i>Zoning</i>	Low Density Residential (R6)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the south side of Menzies Ridge Drive between Buttertubs Marsh Park and Sarum Rise Way.
<i>Total Area</i>	5,470m <sup>2</sup>
<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

The subject property is a vacant lot in the greater Hawthorne subdivision that is being developed between Buttertubs Marsh and Wakesiah Avenue. The property is a through-lot and has a frontage on the corner of Bird Sanctuary Drive and Poets Trail Drive to the south, and Menzies Ridge Drive to the north. The lot is predominantly flat with a slight slope towards Buttertubs Marsh to the west. Buttertubs Marsh and its surrounding riparian area are protected by a covenant that was secured at the time of the property's creation in 2014. A covenant

amendment to limit the total number of dwelling units to 22 was approved by Council on 2020-SEP-17.

The surrounding neighbourhood consists primarily of low-density residential uses with single residential dwellings to the north, east, and south, and duplex lots to the southwest and northwest. Buttertubs Marsh Park is approximately 10m to the west of the subject property. A six-storey, 159-unit affordable seniors' residence is under construction at 10 Buttertubs Drive, approximately 120m northwest of the subject property.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The applicant is proposing a 22-unit multi-family townhouse development consisting of seven buildings. Each unit is roughly 135m<sup>2</sup> in size, with two bedrooms and a den in a two-storey townhouse form with single car garages. The property zoning (R6 – Low Density Residential) permits a base Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 0.45. The applicant is proposing to achieve Tier 1 of Schedule D of the "City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500" (the "Zoning Bylaw"), allowing an additional 0.10 FAR (for a total of 0.55). The total gross floor area for all buildings is approximately 2,464m<sup>2</sup>, and the total FAR is 0.451. Some of the amenities proposed to achieve Tier 1 of Schedule D include:

- a public walkway through the property;
- building design to exceed the BC Energy Step Code by one step;
- plumbing features to use 35% less water than the BC Building Code standard;
- living walls; and
- educational signage installed on site to highlight sustainable water management practices, energy management practices, and alternative transportation options.

### *Site Design*

The proposed buildings are comprised of two to four units each. Buildings A and B face Menzies Ridge Drive and have individual pedestrian connections to the public sidewalk. Buildings C to F are located approximately in the middle of the site and face internal access driveways. Building G faces an internal access driveway and has a rear connection to a private lane with emergency vehicle access only and a 2m-wide public walkway.

A 1.5m-wide private walkway through the middle of the site is proposed, with connections to individual patio areas and a central landscaped play area. The 2m-wide public walkway is protected by an existing statutory right-of-way through the site along the east and south property lines, and connects Menzies Ridge Drive to Bird Sanctuary Drive. The walkway is adjacent to the private lane, which provides vehicular access into the site from Menzies Ridge Drive. The southern portion of the private lane has removable bollards to allow emergency vehicle access only to Bird Sanctuary Drive.

Parking is provided within the single car garages of each unit, and additional surface parking is provided along the private lane, which is accessed from Menzies Ridge Drive. In total, 40 stalls are provided, including 3 accessible stalls, 2 visitor stalls, and facilities for 12 electric vehicle charging stalls. Bicycle parking is proposed, with long-term bicycle storage located within the

parking garages and a short-term bicycle parking rack to be accessed from an internal walkway. Refuse receptacles will be stored within an enclosure located on the south elevation of Building E.

### *Building Design*

The proposed buildings are contemporary in design and provide visual interest along Menzies Ridge Drive and Bird Sanctuary Drive. Buildings A and B on Menzies Ridge Drive are oriented close to the street edge, with a pedestrian connection to each unit from the public walkway.

The front and rear elevations of each building consist of wood-textured longboard bordered by projections with fiber cement panels and metal flashing. Glazing is a prominent feature on both the front and rear elevations of all buildings. Fiber cement panel is predominantly used along the side elevations of the proposed buildings.

Each unit has a low-pitched roof with a flat portion between some units that are set back from the façades. Balconies for outdoor living are fully covered on the front and rear elevations of all units. Entrance canopies are provided to each unit.

### *Landscape Design*

The western landscape buffer incorporates indigenous species that integrate with Buttertubs Marsh, which is adjacent to the subject property. The northern landscape buffer along Menzies Ridge Drive is broken only by pedestrian connections (including the main pedestrian entrance to the site) and the drive aisle that provides vehicular access to the subject property.

Layered plantings are proposed throughout the site, with a mix of indigenous, deciduous, and evergreen shrubs and trees. The landscape plan is centered around a naturalized play area that includes mounds, stepping stone paths, and a cedar platform that overlooks a densely planted low point, to emulate a marsh. Bird boxes are proposed throughout the site to encourage nesting.

Benches and bollard lighting are proposed along the pedestrian walkways and within the central play area. Private amenity spaces are provided for each unit in the form of patios with concrete surfaces that are enclosed by a cedar fence. A 1.8m-high cedar fence on top of a 1.35m-high Redi-Rock retaining wall is proposed along the western property line to provide screening from adjacent properties.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel, at its meeting held on 2020-DEC-15, accepted DP001208 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Re-design the façade of the units facing Menzies Ridge Drive to create a better connection with the street (i.e., add front entries that include weather protection).
- Look at adding articulation to the side elevations; and
- Provide pedestrian links from the covenant sidewalk to the corners of Buildings D and E.

In response to the panel's recommendations, the applicant submitted revised elevations to show additional windows and living walls on the side elevations, and balconies and arbours on the front elevation of the buildings facing Menzies Ridge Drive.

## **Proposed Variances**

### *Minimum Landscape Treatment Level*

Part 17 of the Zoning Bylaw requires that properties within the R6 zone meet Minimum Landscape Treatment Level 2 within the side yard, and a minimum landscape buffer width of 1.8m. The majority of the landscape buffer is reduced to 0m along the east property line to accommodate the drive aisle and a 2m-wide public walkway. Existing fencing will be retained adjacent to the walkway, and a 2m-wide landscape buffer will be provided in the southeast portion of the property between the walkway and neighbouring property. Staff support the proposed variance.

### *Maximum Fence Height*

The Zoning Bylaw allows a maximum fence height of up to 1.2m within the front yard setback in the R6 zone. The applicant is proposing a fence height of up to 2.8m – a proposed variance of 1.6m – in order to add decorative arbours along the front property line in order to add visual interest and reinforce pedestrian wayfinding to the units facing Menzies Ridge Drive. Staff support the proposed variance.

## **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit No. DP1208 is for a 22-unit multi-family townhouse development at 497 Menzies Ridge Drive.
- Variances are requested for the minimum landscape treatment level and maximum fence height.
- The proposed development addresses the City's design guidelines, and Staff support the proposed variances.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions  
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map  
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan  
ATTACHMENT D: Site Plan  
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations and Details  
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings  
ATTACHMENT G: Landscape Plan and Details  
ATTACHMENT H: Schedule D – Amenity Requirements for Additional Density  
ATTACHMENT I: Aerial Photo

### **Submitted by:**

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### **Concurrence by:**

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