

DATE OF MEETING April 25, 2022

AUTHORED BY CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

**SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1234
– 345 NEWCASTLE AVENUE AND 360 STEWART AVENUE**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council’s consideration a development permit application for a 17-unit multi-family residential development at 345 Newcastle Avenue and 360 Stewart Avenue.

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1234 for a multi-family residential development at 345 Newcastle Avenue and 360 Stewart Avenue with the following variances to:

- increase the maximum allowable building height from 14m to 15m; and
- reduce the minimum required parking from 25 parking spaces to 21 parking spaces.

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1234, was received from Masthead Properties Ltd., to permit a multi-family residential development at 345 Newcastle Avenue and 360 Stewart Avenue.

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 “Newcastle + Brechin Design 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 II 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.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing to construct a multi-family residential development consisting of two buildings with a combined total of 17 dwelling units. The West Building, facing Stewart Avenue, will be four-storeys and the East Building, facing Newcastle Avenue, will be five-storeys. The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	West Building	East Building	Total
One-Bedroom	8	1	9
Two-Bedroom	4	1	5
Three-Bedroom	-	3	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>17</i>

The total proposed gross floor area is 2,139m² and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will equal 1.32. The base maximum FAR in the R8 zone is 1.25 and the applicant is proposing to achieve an additional 0.1 FAR through the provision of amenities as outlined in 'Schedule D – Amenity Requirements for Additional Density' of the "City of Nanaimo Zoning Bylaw 2011 No. 4500" (the "Zoning Bylaw") for a total maximum permitted FAR of 1.35. The applicant is proposing to meet Tier 1 in 'Schedule D' of the Zoning Bylaw by providing amenities including the following:

- public art installed onsite;
- provision of a public carshare vehicle and parking space;
- building design to exceed the BC Energy Step Code by one step; and,
- educational signage installed onsite to highlight sustainable transportation alternatives and sustainable energy management practices.

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 on the south side of the East Building to lead to two parking levels between the buildings. No vehicle access will be provided from Stewart Avenue which is a highway under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI). The subject lots will be consolidated as a condition of the development permit, and storm water and sanitary connections to the adjacent property at 370 Stewart Avenue will be secured by a private easement.

A total of 21 parking stalls are proposed and a variance of four stalls is requested. The lower parking level, behind the East Building, will contain ten parking stalls and the upper parking level, behind the West Building, will contain eleven parking stalls. Both parking levels will be partially at-grade and partially covered. Long-term bicycle storage is proposed on the ground level of the West Building and outside the front entry of the East Building. A refuse storage room is proposed in each building.

Walkways to building entries from adjacent streets are proposed, and secondary entries to the buildings are provided from the parking levels. An exterior walkway and stairs are provided along the south side of the West Building, and there is an additional exit route and walkway from the north side of the East Building. A shared outdoor amenity area will be provided on the roof of the lower parking level, with a walkway connection to the upper parking level. A public art feature will be incorporated into the site design facing Newcastle Avenue.

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. Balconies on the south elevation will maximize solar gain and will be set back from the south property line. Both buildings will have a visible street-facing entry portico. The flat roofs of each building are interrupted by over-height clerestory windows.

Exterior materials include brick cladding on the West Building elevation facing Stewart Avenue, fibre 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 include roof overhangs on both buildings with wood-like fibre cement soffits.

The character and massing of the proposed building design meets the intent of the Newcastle + Brechin Design Guidelines.

Landscape Design

Landscaping is proposed around the perimeter of the site and between the two buildings, with low shrubs and decorative trees including shore pine, cypress, dogwood, maple, and magnolias. A private lawn for residents is proposed adjacent to the shared outdoor amenity area located on the roof of the covered parking area behind 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 south side of the East Building. Site lighting will be provided along walkways throughout the site. Natural concrete retaining walls are proposed for portions of the side property lines where there is a grade difference from adjacent properties, with fencing for site security.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at the meeting held on 2021-JUL-29, accepted DP1234 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Consider improving the access to the central lawn area and developing it as a shared amenity space; and,
- Consider providing additional trees and shrubs in the landscape plan.

The applicant subsequently revised the application to include an outdoor amenity space for residents in the centre of the site and submitted a revised landscape plan with a more robust planting plan. In addition to addressing the DAP recommendations, the applicant revised the development proposal by enlarging the West Building (increasing the height from three to four storeys) and seeking additional density by providing 'Schedule D' amenities. The form and character of the proposed building has remained largely the same as what was presented to the DAP.

Proposed Variances

Maximum Building Height

The maximum permitted building height in the R8 zone is 14m. The applicant is proposing a building height of 15m for small portions of each building, a requested variance of 1m. The variance is requested to accommodate the clerestory level of additional windows at the ends of the buildings (see Attachment E). The additional height is not anticipated to impact the perceived height of the buildings and will add visual interest to the buildings' design. The Newcastle Neighbourhood Association indicated support for the building heights as proposed, and identified no concerns with the proposed height variance.

Minimum Required Parking

The minimum required off-street parking for the proposed development is 25 parking spaces. The proposed development includes 21 parking spaces, a requested variance of four spaces (16%).

In accordance with the City's Policy for Consideration of a Parking Variance, the applicant has provided the following rationale in support of the variance request:

- Site constraints related to lot width and grade limit the ability to provide additional parking;
- The proposed parking composition supports a design and massing that is consistent with the Newcastle + Brechin Design Guidelines;
- The subject property is within the 600m buffer of the Downtown Mobility Hub as identified in the Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan;
- The subject property is in close proximity to active transportation routes (the Waterfront Walkway and the E&N Trail) and a future rapid transit route (Terminal Avenue) where alternative modes of transportation are promoted;
- Secure and accessible long-term bicycle storage in excess of the minimum required bicycle parking;
- The Newcastle Neighbourhood Association has reviewed the proposed parking variance and indicated no concerns; and,
- Provision of an onsite carshare vehicle, that has been accepted in principle by Modo, may reduce car ownership for residents.

As per the City of Nanaimo "Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266" (the "Parking Bylaw"), a development at this location requires 1.26 stalls per one-bedroom unit, 1.62 stalls per two-bedroom unit, and 1.84 stalls per three-bedroom unit. The proposed parking rate will provide more than one parking space per unit, with a rate of 1.24 spaces per unit.

Staff have reviewed and support both proposed variances.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit Application No. DP1234 is for a multi-family residential development consisting of two buildings with a combined total of 17 dwelling units.
- The character and massing of the proposed building design meets the intent of the Newcastle + Brechin Design Guidelines.
- The applicant is proposing to meet Tier 1 in ‘Schedule D’ of the Zoning Bylaw by providing amenities such as public art, a carshare vehicle, and building design that will exceed the BC Energy Step Code requirements.
- Variances are requested to increase the maximum building height from 14m to 15m and to reduce the minimum required parking from 25 parking spaces to 21 parking spaces. Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Site and Parking Plans
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

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