

DATE OF MEETING May 16, 2022

AUTHORED BY CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

**SUBJECT DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1241 –  
6330 McROBB AVENUE**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a multi-family rental residential development at 6330 McRobb Avenue.

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1241 for a multi-family residential development at 6330 McRobb Avenue with a variance to increase the maximum permitted building height from 14.0m to 19.6m.

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1241, was received from Daryoush Firouzli Architecture Inc. on behalf of Carmague Properties Inc., to permit an 88-unit multi-family rental residential building at 6330 McRobb Avenue. This development will be Phase 2 of the Dover Ridge Apartments on the subject property. Phase 1 (DP909) was completed in 2016 and contains 50 rental units.

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

<i>Zoning</i>	Medium Density Residential (R8)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the south side of McRobb Avenue and is encircled by Sentinal Drive, a privately maintained road.
<i>Total Area</i>	9,429m <sup>2</sup>
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plan – Urban Node 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 located in North Nanaimo within the Woodgrove Urban Node and the Dover Neighbourhood. Phase 1 of Dover Ridge Apartments occupies the north portion of the lot facing McRobb Avenue. The west, south, and east edges of the property are crossed by Sentinal Drive through an easement. The lot is relatively flat and contains a small cluster of existing trees.

Surrounding land uses include a 16-unit townhouse development to the west, an 89-unit townhouse development across McRobb Avenue to the north, an 89-unit four-storey condominium building to the east (the Texada), a recently-completed 108-unit five-storey rental building to the southeast (Uplands Terrace Apartments), and a vacant lot to the south that is

zoned for high density residential in 6- to 20-storey building forms. Other nearby uses include Georgia View Village retail centre approximately 100m to the west, Costco approximately 200m to the west, and the Nanaimo North branch of the Vancouver Island Regional Library approximately 400m to the south. The site is in close proximity to other amenities including schools, parks, services, and transit.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The applicant is proposing to construct a six-storey multi-family residential building with 88 rental dwelling units and underground parking. The proposed building will be the final phase of the Dover Ridge Apartments development. The proposed unit composition is as follows:

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Studio	18
One-Bedroom	35
Two-Bedroom	30
Three-Bedroom	5

The proposed gross floor area is 7,176m<sup>2</sup> and combined with the existing 4,310m<sup>2</sup> Phase 1 building, the total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) on the site will equal 1.22, below the maximum permitted FAR of 1.25 in the R8 zone.

### *Site Design*

The building will be sited in the southwest portion of the site on the opposite side of an existing drive aisle from the Phase 1 building. An open area will be maintained to the southeast of the proposed building for an amenity space and storm water retention area.

The existing surface parking lot onsite is proposed to be expanded with additional parking underground accessed via a vehicle ramp from the drive aisle. All vehicle access to the site will be maintained from the existing access from Sentinal Drive on the west side of the property. In addition to the 68 parking stalls already provided onsite, proposed parking will include 22 new surface parking stalls, six parallel parking stalls on Sentinal Drive, and 45 underground parking stalls. A total of 141 parking stalls will be provided onsite, more than the 140 parking stalls required for both phases (including 87 stalls for Phase 2). Long-term bicycle storage is proposed in the underground parking level. Waste collection is proposed from the existing enclosure in the Phase 1 parking lot that will be sized to accommodate waste collected for both buildings.

The main entrance to the building will be on the north side of the proposed building, facing the internal surface parking lot. The primary pedestrian access to the site is proposed facing the internal drive aisle and outdoor amenity area and a secondary access is proposed from Sentinal Drive to the southeast. Ground-level units will have direct pedestrian connections to Sentinal Drive.

### *Building Design*

The proposed building complements and continues the contemporary design from the existing Phase 1 building. The proposed building will act as a transition between the future high-density residential buildings to the southwest, approved six-storey building to the south and the existing five- and four-storey buildings to the east. The proposed building is L-shaped to take advantage of the site geometry and mirror the layout of the existing Phase 1 building. A variety of exterior materials are proposed including different coloured cement composite siding and cementitious plank siding, with an alternate woodgrain plank siding to distinguish the exterior of the ground level. The building design is well articulated and meets the intent of the General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines.

The interior of the proposed building is oriented around the lobby and elevator shaft in the centre of the building, with dwelling units in both wings of the building. A common indoor amenity room is proposed on the ground level and common rooftop amenity space is proposed at the east end of the uppermost floor. All units will have either a private patio or balcony.

### *Landscape Design*

Three primary planting areas are proposed: around the front entry and amenity space to the north of the building, along the Sentinal Drive frontage in the southwest, and in the open area to the southeast. A large Arbutus tree will be retained on the south side of the lot and a total of 131 replacement trees will be planted. The planting plan includes both deciduous and coniferous trees as well as a number of small shrubs, grasses, ferns, and perennials. A yew hedge will be continued along the east property line on the edge of the surface parking lot to screen views of the parking area from Sentinal Drive.

Other proposed site elements include a crushed gravel path around a bio-swale, seating areas in both outdoor amenity spaces, bollard lighting along walkways, a metal picket fence, and a shared patio located outside the ground-level amenity room.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2021-OCT-14, accepted DP1241 as presented with support for the proposed building height variance and with the following recommendations:

- an alternate roof design to break up and reduce the visual weight of the fifth and sixth floor roof forms;
- a design feature to emphasize the main entrance in the overall design;
- the re-design of the drop-off area to form a more plaza-like space;
- increasing the landscape/greenspace areas between the two buildings;
- providing a pedestrian linkage between the buildings and landscaped areas;
- a revised distribution of form and colour scheme with consideration of the Phase 1 building and neighbourhood context;
- providing additional green space as a rooftop amenity; and,
- a street-front access/connection to the street for the at-grade units.

The applicant subsequently revised the development proposal in response to the DAP recommendations with the following changes:

- reducing the sixth floor massing by stepping the building to five storeys at the eastern end (by adding a rooftop amenity space);
- adding a more prominent horizontal band above the fifth storey to reduce the perceived massing of the floor above;
- removing parking from in front of the building entry to create additional ground-level outdoor amenity space;
- creating a pedestrian connection between the existing building and proposed building; and,
- providing pedestrian connections from ground-level units to Sentinel Drive.

## **Proposed Variances**

### *Maximum Building Height*

The maximum permitted building height in the R8 zone is 14.0m. The proposed building height is 19.6m, a requested variance of 5.6m.

The building height variance is proposed in order to provide the permitted density onsite in a more compact building footprint which provides for greater soft surface area and amenity space. With the proposed six-storey massing, the development is able to provide two common outdoor amenity spaces: outside the main entry and to the southeast of the building. The building has been stepped from six- to five-storeys to provide rooftop amenity space. Through building design, the applicant has also reduced the perceived massing of the building by emphasizing the roofline above the fifth storey and de-emphasizing the roofline at the sixth storey.

The applicant has provided a Massing Study (Attachment H) to demonstrate how the same density could be achieved with a larger building footprint but without a height variance and without preserving outdoor spaces. The previous concept from the time of rezoning envisioned one large building for the subject property and the current proposal offers more permeability of the site, and breaks in building massing, which better relates to the surrounding context of the neighbourhood. Through preliminary shadowing studies, the applicant has noted that the proposed building siting in the south portion of the lot minimizes impact on adjacent lots.

The subject property is located within the Woodgrove Urban Node as identified by the City of Nanaimo Official Community Plan, where taller residential buildings are supported. While the permitted density in the R8 zone allows for adequate density in the Urban Node land use designation, the building form afforded by the R8 zone does not achieve what is envisioned in the Urban Node. While some zones in the City allow for additional building height when parking is provided underground, the R8 zone does not.

The proposed six- and five-storey building form will offer a transition from the R9-zoned property to the southwest (6340 McRobb Avenue) where buildings between six- and 20-storeys are permitted, and the properties to the east where there are existing five- and four-storey buildings (6117 Uplands Drive and 6310 McRobb Avenue).

Staff support the proposed building height variance.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit Application No. DP1241 is for a six-storey 88-unit multi-family rental residential building at 6330 McRobb Avenue.
- The proposed building will be the final phase of the Dover Ridge Apartments development.
- A variance is requested to increase the maximum permitted building height from 14.0m to 19.6m.
- Staff support the proposed variance.

### **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: Massing Study  
ATTACHMENT I: Aerial Photo

#### **Submitted by:**

Lainya Rowett  
Manager, Current Planning

#### **Concurrence by:**

Jeremy Holm  
Director, Development Approvals

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager, Development Services /  
Deputy CAO