

DATE OF MEETING | August 29, 2022 |

AUTHORED BY | CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING |

SUBJECT | **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1248  
– 6985 ISLAND HIGHWAY NORTH** |

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council’s consideration a development permit application for a multi-family rental development at 6985 Island Highway North. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1248 for a multi-family residential development at 6985 Island Highway North with variances to:

1. reduce the minimum required front yard setback from the Nanaimo Parkway from 20.0m to 7.5m; and,
2. increase the maximum permitted building height from 14.0m to 17.7m. |

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1248, was received from District Developments Corp., on behalf of North Grove Nominee Ltd., to permit a multi-family rental development at 6985 Island Highway North consisting of two 5-storey buildings with a combined total of 149 dwelling units. This application is the second phase of a residential development; the first phase consists of three 4-storey buildings with a combined total of 146 dwelling units at 6975 Island Highway North that were completed in 2020 (DP1083).

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

<i>Zoning</i>	Woodgrove Urban Centre (CC4)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is bounded by the Nanaimo Parkway to the southwest, the City of Nanaimo municipal boundary to the northwest (shared with the District of Lantzville), and Island Highway North to the northeast.
<i>Total Area</i>	1.17ha
<i>City Plan</i>	Schedule 2 – Future Land Use Designations – Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre Schedule 12 – Development Permit Area No. 7 – Nanaimo Parkway Design Schedule 13 – Development Permit Area No. 8 – Form and Character
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines

The subject property is located at the northern gateway of Nanaimo within the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre and the Dover Neighbourhood. The lot is presently vacant and is located immediately adjacent to the Phase 1 at 6975 Island Highway. Surrounding land uses

include commercial shopping plazas to the north and east, and vacant land across the Nanaimo Parkway to the southwest. Both abutting highways are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. An existing amenity area on the lot was constructed as part of the Phase 1.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The applicant proposes to construct two 5-storey rental apartment buildings with a combined total of 149 dwelling units and a unit composition as follows:

<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>
Studio	13
One-Bedroom	89
Two-Bedroom	47

The proposed total gross floor area is 11,665m<sup>2</sup> and the total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will equal 0.99, below the maximum permitted FAR of 1.25 in the CC4 zone.

### *Site Design*

The proposed buildings are oriented to maximize street presence and to maximize south-facing solar gain. Building A, is aligned parallel to the north property line, adjacent to the Island Highway, and Building B is aligned parallel to the southwest property line adjacent to the Nanaimo Parkway. Vehicle access is from an internal drive aisle that is shared between Phases 1 and 2, and is accessed from the Island Highway. Surface parking areas are located between Buildings A and B, and on the north and south sides of Building B. Underground parking is provided beneath both buildings, with access from the northwest corner of the site. A total of 164 parking spaces are provided (147 parking spaces are required), of which 78 of the spaces will be underground. All required bicycle parking will be provided onsite.

The primary building entrances face the internal parking area and a network of pedestrian walkways will create a loop in the eastern portion of the site between the parking areas and the building entrances and outdoor amenity spaces. A central, shared greenspace 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. Additional amenity space is proposed adjacent to the existing greenspace, and an indoor amenity room in Building B will open directly toward the greenspace. Additionally, a dog run for residents is proposed at the southern end of the site, and a three-stream solid waste receptacle enclosure is proposed to the south of Building A.

### *Building Design*

Each building is contemporary in design with flat roofs flared at the western ends of the buildings to provide visual interest from the highways. Exterior materials include cementitious plank siding, wood-like cladding, cement composite, brick veneer, black vinyl windows, and aluminum railings for the patios and decks. The proposed exterior finishes are complementary to 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 is recessed into the façade with the railings projecting out from the building face to provide articulation on 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. Window design facing the Nanaimo Parkway will be required to meet acoustic standards as recommended by the Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines, with an acoustic study to be secured as a condition of the Development Permit.

### *Landscape Design*

The north, west, and south sides of the site contain a generous landscape buffer, and the edge of the internal drive aisle will be planted with trees. The edge treatment consists of a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees. Groundcover onsite 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 and the solid waste enclosure will be screened with vegetation adjacent to the parking area.

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 pavers to emphasize the entry areas. Low boulder and concrete retaining walls are used throughout the site. The amenity space provided in front of Building B, adjacent to the shared park space, will include benches, café-style tables with seating, pavers, and a wooden trellis. Bollard lighting is provided throughout the site.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel, at its meeting held on 2021-DEC-09, accepted DP1248 as presented with support for the proposed building height variance. The following recommendations were provided for the applicant's consideration:

- Consider adding a rooftop deck;
- Consider amending the parking area between Building A and B to provide additional amenity space for residents;
- Consider ways to revise the landscape concept and the form and character of the northwest corner of the site to highlight the property location at the entrance of the City; and,
- Consider another location for the garbage enclosure.

The applicant subsequently revised the development proposal in response to the recommendations with the following changes or comments.

- The possibility of a rooftop amenity space was explored but the applicant ultimately determined that this was not viable.
- 12 surface parking stalls have been removed from the site plan and the amenity space has been expanded. An outdoor dog run has been added to the site plan.
- The building design has been revised to create flared rooflines at the northwest corner of Building A and the west corner of Building B to create more visual interest. The applicant

has also revised the landscape plan to create a more robust buffer at the western edge of the site.

- The solid waste enclosure has been relocated to a central location from its originally proposed location at the western edge of the property, just north of Building B.

## **Proposed Variances**

### *Nanaimo Parkway Setback*

The minimum required front yard setback is 20.0m from a property line that abuts the Nanaimo Parkway right-of-way. The proposed Nanaimo Parkway front yard setback for Building B is 7.5m, a requested variance of 12.5m.

The variance is requested to maximize usable space onsite. The building siting in proximity to the Nanaimo Parkway is comparable to Phase 1 and will provide street presence at the northern gateway to the City. As identified in the Nanaimo Parkway Design Guidelines, this portion of the Parkway is considered part of the 'Urban Parkway' where visibility into developments is expected. In addition to the landscape buffer proposed onsite, there is existing vegetation within the Nanaimo Parkway right-of-way and the total distance between the edge of the Parkway and proposed Building B will be approximately 32m. To address potential noise impacts from the Nanaimo Parkway, an acoustic study will be required as a condition of this Development Permit.

### *Maximum Building Height*

The maximum permitted building height in the CC4 zone is 14.0m. The proposed building height is 17.7m, a proposed variance of 3.7m.

The building height variance is proposed, in order to provide the permitted density onsite in a more compact building footprint, and to provide additional outdoor amenity space. The applicant has provided a Height Variance Rationale Letter (see Attachment H) and Massing Study (see Attachment I) to demonstrate how the same density could be achieved without a height variance but with a more distributed form of building massing that reduces the area available for outdoor amenities and permeable surfaces. In response to the DAP recommendations, the building rooflines were also elevated at the ends to provide more visual interest to this gateway site.

The subject property is located within the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre, as identified by the City Plan, where building heights of up to 12 storeys are contemplated. The proposed 5-storey building height achieves a more compact urban form that is supportable given the City Plan policies and will not negatively impact adjacent properties as the site is largely separated by roads and commercial uses from other residences.

Staff support the proposed variances.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit Application No. DP1248 is for two 5-storey multi-family rental residential buildings with a combined total of 149 dwelling units at 6985 Island Highway North.
- This application is the second phase of a residential development; the first phase consists of three 4-storey buildings with a combined total of 146 dwelling units at 6975 Island Highway North that were completed in 2020.
- Variances are requested to reduce the minimum required setback from the Nanaimo Parkway from 20.0m and 7.5m, and to increase the maximum permitted building height from 14.0m to 17.7m.
- 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: Height Variance Rationale Letter  
ATTACHMENT I: Massing Study  
ATTACHMENT J: Aerial Photo

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