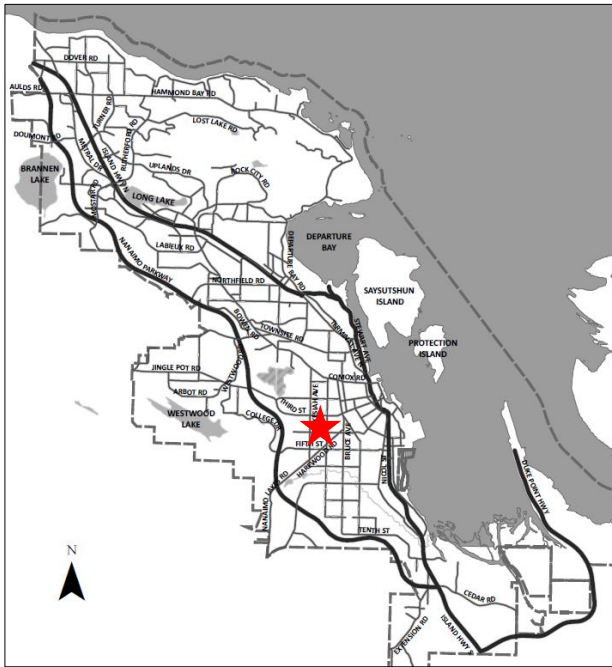


DATE OF MEETING [June 5, 2023]

AUTHORED BY [CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING]

**SUBJECT** DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1284 – 380 AND 385 WATFIELD AVENUE



**Proposal:**

A 168-unit multi-family townhouse development



**Zoning:**

CD11 – Comprehensive Development District Zone Eleven

**City Plan Land Use Designation:**

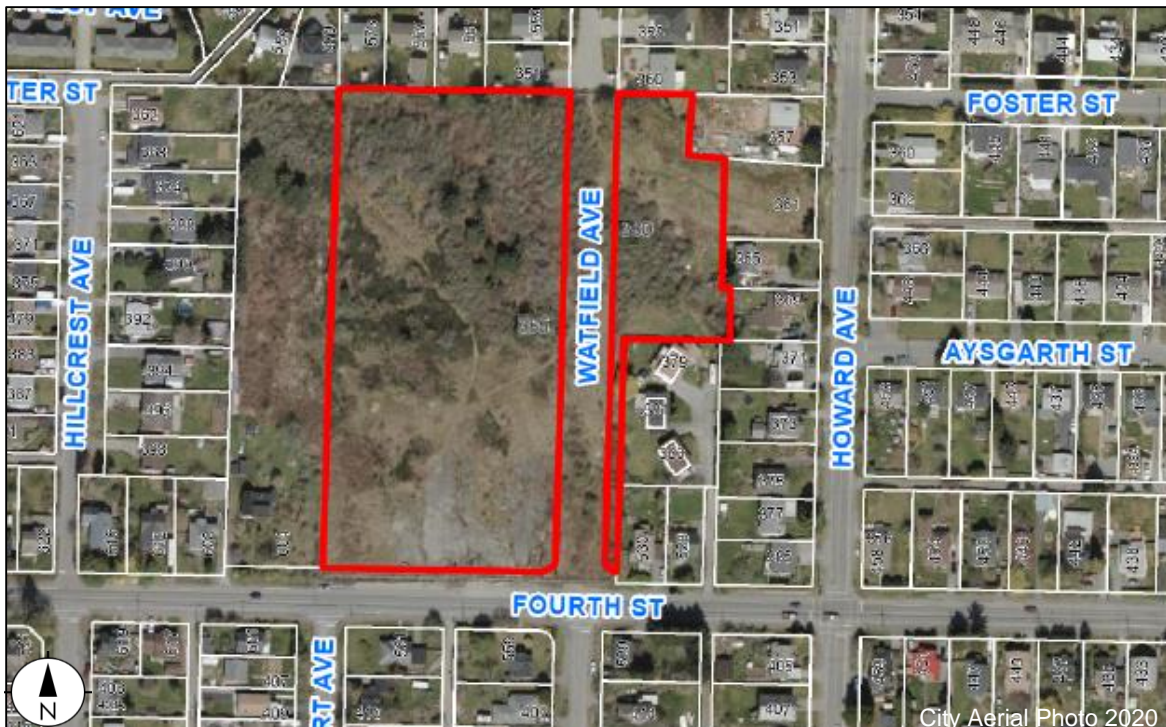
Neighbourhood; Suburban Neighbourhood

**Development Permit Area:**

DPA8 – Form and Character

**Lot Area:**

380 Watfield Avenue – 0.47ha  
385 Watfield Avenue – 1.87ha



## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a multi-family development at 380 and 385 Watfield Avenue. |

### **Recommendation**

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1284 for a multi-family residential development at 380 and 385 Watfield Road with variances as outlined in the "Proposed Variances" section of the Staff Report dated 2023-JUN-05. |

## **BACKGROUND**

A development permit application, DP1284, was received from 0760408 BC Ltd. for a multi-family townhouse development consisting of a combined total of 168 dwelling units at 380 and 385 Watfield Avenue. The subject properties were recently rezoned to a comprehensive development zone (RA476) along with the neighbouring property at 604 Fourth Street (RA480), which has not applied for a development permit at this time. A boundary adjustment application (SUB1469) creating the subject properties and dedicating Watfield Avenue was completed in April 2023.

### **Subject Properties and Site Context**

The subject properties are located in the Harewood Neighbourhood near Vancouver Island University (VIU), approximately 225m west of the subject site. The properties are presently vacant and were previously the site of a schoolhouse which was demolished in 1995. Portions of the site are sloping, with high points along the west property line and the northeast corner of the site, and a depression running through the centre. An unconstructed portion of Watfield Avenue bisects the site, with 385 Watfield Avenue on the west side of the road and 380 Watfield Avenue on the east side. The property at 385 Watfield Avenue has additional frontage along Fourth Street to the south. A road reserve covenant for the future extension of Foster Street has been secured along the north property line as part of the rezoning, in addition to the dedication of a municipal park on Howard Avenue to the east with improvements.

Surrounding land uses are primarily residential with single residential dwellings immediately adjacent to the site and a three-unit strata lot on Wheatley Place. Nearby recent developments include four-storey mixed-use commercial and residential developments at 525 Third Street and 300 Howard Avenue, approximately 100m and 225m north of the site, respectively. Other amenities within walking distance to the site include the Nanaimo District Secondary School, the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre, a local neighbourhood centre at Fourth Street and Bruce Avenue, and the University Village Shopping Centre. The site is also within walking distance of bus routes on Wakesiah Avenue. |

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Proposed Development**

The proposed development is a multi-family residential strata consisting of 22 three-storey townhouse buildings, with a combined total of 168 dwelling units, and a two-storey amenity building. The unit composition includes 147 three-bedroom units (between 126m<sup>2</sup> and 135m<sup>2</sup>) and 21 four-bedroom units (between 147m<sup>2</sup> and 159m<sup>2</sup> in area). All units will qualify as “family-friendly” units, in excess of the minimum required 50% of units secured for three or more bedrooms through rezoning. The property at 385 Watfield Avenue will have 142 units and 380 Watfield Avenue will have 26 units. A phased strata will cover both of the properties.

The proposed gross floor area is 22,632m<sup>2</sup> with 18,648m<sup>2</sup> at 385 Watfield and 3,984m<sup>2</sup> at 380 Watfield. The total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will be 1.00 at 385 Watfield and 0.86 at 380 Watfield, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 1.00 in the CD11 zone.

### *Site Design*

The townhouse blocks will be arranged in a series of rows facing four internal drive aisles at 385 Watfield Avenue. Most drive aisles will include two townhouse blocks with nine units on both sides of the drive aisle. Where the site abuts Fourth Street and the future Foster Street road reserve, the townhouse blocks will be broken in three buildings oriented towards the public streets. The north and south drive aisles will be protected by a reciprocal access agreement for future access to 604 Fourth Street to the west. On the east side of the site, 380 Watfield Avenue will have two townhouse blocks facing Watfield Avenue and two townhouse blocks facing internal drive aisles. The private amenity building will also be located on 380 Watfield Avenue, adjacent to the park dedication.

All required parking will be provided onsite with tandem two-car garages provided for all units, except for some end units and Building 21 where garages will include side-by-side parking. An additional 14 surface visitor parking stalls are proposed, two of which will be accessible parking stalls. This parking is in addition to on-street parking expected to be constructed on Watfield Avenue when it is completed as part of the development. Each unit will include storage for solid waste bins (garbage, recycling, and organics) and long-term bicycle storage on the ground level of each unit as shown in the typical garage layout (Attachment C). Short-term bicycle parking (bike racks) will be available in front of the amenity building.

A series of public multi-use trails provide pedestrian connectivity across the site to be constructed to the Urban (Hard Surface) Walkway standard, as secured through rezoning. These trails include: a north/south trail along the west property line shared with 604 Fourth Street; an east/west trail through the Foster Street road reserve area, until such time as the road is dedicated and constructed; and an east/west trail between Watfield Avenue and the park dedication to the east. Onsite lighting will include overhead light standards along shared drive aisles, and exterior soffit lighting on buildings.

All units will have an outdoor private patio in either the front or rear yard, and 1.8m-high wood fences will screen rear yards from each other. A common outdoor amenity space with furnishings is proposed to the east side of the amenity building where it backs onto the dedicated park.

### *Building Design*

The general building design emphasizes a traditional residential character with strong pitched roofs, projecting bay window elements, balconies, and large windows. Front doors will face public streets, and sides of townhouse blocks facing Watfield Avenue will have additional elements (including wrap-around balconies and side doors) to provide street presence. The massing along Fourth Street will be broken up to provide additional visual interest. Exterior materials will consist of a mix of vinyl horizontal and shingle siding. The building design substantially meets the intent of the applicable General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and Harewood Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines.

### *Landscape Design*

Landscaping is proposed throughout the site, with buffers provided along road frontages, adjacent to neighbouring units, and between private patios. Cedar hedges will be provided along side yards and will be used to screen hydro boxes. Ornamental trees are proposed at the front entry of each unit, with a mix of maple, birch, spruce, and other species. Additional trees are proposed in the yards of most units.

### **Design Advisory Panel**

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2022-OCT-13 accepted DP1284 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Look at ways to vary surfaces from road to driveways;
- Consider increasing the tree coverage on site; and,
- Consider ways to connect the space between the buildings where parking is located as a pedestrian pathway.

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

- Including stamped and coloured asphalt in a herringbone pattern to differentiate the drive aisle and driveway surfaces; and,
- Revising the landscape plan to add one large deciduous shade tree, 11 columnar deciduous trees, and cedar hedges with 30 individual plants.

Opportunities to provide additional pedestrian connections were explored between buildings to connect the east-west drive aisles, however with the location of the visitor parking stalls and pad-mounded transformers it was determined to not be viable. The applicant also noted potential redundancy with the public north-south trail connection secured along the west property line of 385 Watfield Avenue.

### **Proposed Variances**

#### *Minimum Side Yard Setback*

The minimum required side yard setback in the CD11 zone is 3.0m for a building with a height greater than 9.0m. The proposed north side yard setback at 380 Watfield Avenue is 2.0m for Building 19 (where the building height is 12.2m) and 1.5m for the amenity building (where the building height is 9.94m), requested variances of 1.0m and 1.5m respectively.



While the closest point of Building 19 to the north property line is 2.0m, this portion of the building is only 8.2m in height which is similar to the height of the single residential dwelling to the north. For comparison, the standard required setback in single dwelling residential zones is 1.5m. The remainder of the building is set back between 3.2m and 3.5m from the same property line. In order to address siting considerations, a landscape buffer is proposed along the north property line of 380 Watfield Avenue with a 1.8m-high cedar privacy fence and wall-mounted climbing vine trellis. The north face of both buildings will have minimal fenestration in order to reduce potential overlook to neighbouring properties. The applicant has provided a shadow study (Attachment F) that demonstrates minimal potential shadowing impacts.

### *Maximum Building Height*

The maximum permitted building height in the CD11 zone is 11.7m for a building with a sloped roof. The proposed building height for Buildings 1-22 is 12.2m, a requested variance of 0.5m. At the time of rezoning, the applicant had anticipated a maximum building height of 11.7m for the CD11 zone. Through the development of refined building plans, however, the need for additional height was identified in order to accommodate existing grades, roof pitch angles, and livable floor-to-ceiling heights. The requested height variance is equal to 50cm and is not anticipated to have an additional visual impact given the 6:12 roof pitches. No height variance is requested for the amenity building.

Staff support the proposed variances.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Development Permit Application No. DP1284 is for a multi-family townhouse development consisting of a combined total of 168 dwelling units at 380 and 385 Watfield Avenue.
- The building design substantially meets the intent of the applicable General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and Harewood Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines.
- Variances are requested to reduce the minimum required side yard setback and to increase the maximum permitted building heights.
- Staff support the proposed variances.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
- ATTACHMENT B: Subject Property Map
- ATTACHMENT C: Site Plan and Typical Garage Layout
- ATTACHMENT D: Building Elevations and Details
- ATTACHMENT E: Building Rendering
- ATTACHMENT F: Shadow Study
- ATTACHMENT G: Landscape Plan and Details

**Submitted by:**

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**Concurrence by:**

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Director, Development Approvals

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager, Development Services  
/ Deputy CAO