

# STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

## DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001318 – 427/449/455 NICOL STREET

**Applicant/Architect:** STANTEC ARCHITECTURE LTD.

**Owner:** SEAWALL BUILDING TECHNOLOGIES LTD.

**Landscape Architect:** KINSHIP DESIGN ART ECOLOGY

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### SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	Community Corridor (COR3)
<i>Location</i>	The subject properties are located on the east side of Nicol Street, mid-block between Farquhar Street and Needham Street.
<i>Total Area</i>	1,646m <sup>2</sup>
<i>City Plan (OCP)</i>	Future Land Use Designation – Residential Corridor Development Permit Area DPA4 – Abandoned Coal Mine Workings Hazards Development Permit Area DPA8 – Form and Character
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; and South End Urban Design Framework and Guidelines

The subject properties are located in the South End neighbourhood and are currently vacant. The lots abut Nicol Street, which is under the jurisdiction of the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, to the west, and a lane to the east. The properties slope downhill from west to east towards the lane. Surrounding land uses are primarily lower density residential uses including single residential dwellings, duplexes, and triplexes.

A previous development permit application for the site, DP1202, was considered by the Design Advisory Panel in 2020, however, this application was later canceled.

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is a 4-storey multi-family residential building with 35 dwelling units and under-the-building parking. The proposed unit composition and sizes are as follows:

- 8 studio units, 33m<sup>2</sup> in floor area;
- 15 one-bedroom units between 43m<sup>2</sup> and 54m<sup>2</sup> in floor area; and,
- 12 two-bedroom units between 68m<sup>2</sup> and 80m<sup>2</sup> in floor area.

The proposed gross floor area is 2,384m<sup>2</sup> and the total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will be 1.45, which is the maximum permitted FAR for this development. The base maximum FAR for the COR3 zone is 0.75 and the applicant is proposing to achieve an additional 0.50 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") and an additional 0.20 FAR by providing a portion of the required parking underground.

The applicant is proposing to meet Tier 2 in 'Schedule D' by providing amenities including the following:

- on-site carshare parking space;
- 50% of parking spaces with access to electric vehicle (EV) charging;
- scooter / motorcycle parking;
- 75% renewable construction resources;
- exceeding the BC Energy Step Code;
- 50% permeable surface area;
- reduced usage plumbing features;
- 10% accessible units;
- garden beds for residents;
- a commitment to below-market rental units; and,
- educational signage.

### Site Design

The proposed building will be sited to face Nicol Street with vehicle access from the lane in the rear. Parking will be provided at-grade and under-the-building in a parking level that is partially underground and partially exposed at ground level. Access to the parking level will be via two drive aisles from the lane each with a separate overhead gate for under-the-building portions. Of the 35 parking spaces proposed, 14 will be at-grade and 21 will be under-the-building. Long-term bicycle parking is provided in a storage room in the parking level, and short-term bicycle parking will be adjacent to the front building entry on Nicol Street. A garbage room on the parking level will be accessed directly from the lane.

The principal pedestrian entry to the site will be from the sidewalk on Nicol Street with a ramp and stairs to the first floor level. A secondary entry is proposed directly from the lane. Street-level units will have direct connections between private patios and the sidewalk, separated by small metal gates. An outdoor amenity space is proposed on the north side of the building, and a staircase on the south side of the building will connect the Nicol Street level to the lane.

Staff Comments:

- Explore opportunities for an expanded or additional common outdoor amenity area, for example as a rooftop deck.
- Consider options to consolidate the parking areas and eliminate one vehicle access and overhead gate.
- Ensure that off-site illumination impacts from exposed parking level are adequately mitigated.

### Building Design

The proposed building will present a 4-storey façade on the west elevation facing Nicol Street, and a 5-storey façade on the east elevation facing the lane where the parking level is exposed. The building design is contemporary with a residential character expressed on all elevations. A three-storey framing element is emphasized with the uppermost storey using lighter shades of cladding, in line with the South End Urban Design Framework and Guidelines. Prominent balconies are featured on both the west and east elevations, and a recessed covered entryway is sited at the southwest corner of the building.

Exterior building materials will consist of different shades of fibre cement panels in plank and smooth formats. Exposed concrete walls will be present at the exposed parking level facing the lane. Powder-coated aluminum rails are proposed for balconies.

Staff Comments:

- Look at a stronger emphasis of the roofline, for example with more prominent parapet flashing.
- Consider softer tones for the exterior building materials in line with the heritage residential palette in the South End neighbourhood.

### Landscape Design

The proposed landscape design includes planting along the Nicol Street frontage in concrete planters to screen private patios from the street. Garden beds are proposed in the outdoor amenity space to the north of the building. Additional planting is proposed around the at-grade parking spaces, adjacent to the lane, and a cedar panel fence is proposed along the property line with the lane. Site amenity features include timber benches in the amenity area and outside of the front entryway. Wall-mounted lights are proposed along pedestrian walkways across the site.

Staff Comments:

- Review the functionality of the proposed garden beds on the north side of the building, and consider rooftop gardens as an alternative.
- Consider a fence type with transparency along the lane, for example a metal picket fence.
- Ensure that adequate landscaping can be provided along the south property to provide a buffer and minimize impacts on the adjacent residence.

### **PROPOSED VARIANCES**

The minimum required parking for the proposed development is 47 parking stalls. A total of 35 parking stalls are proposed, a requested variance of 12 spaces.