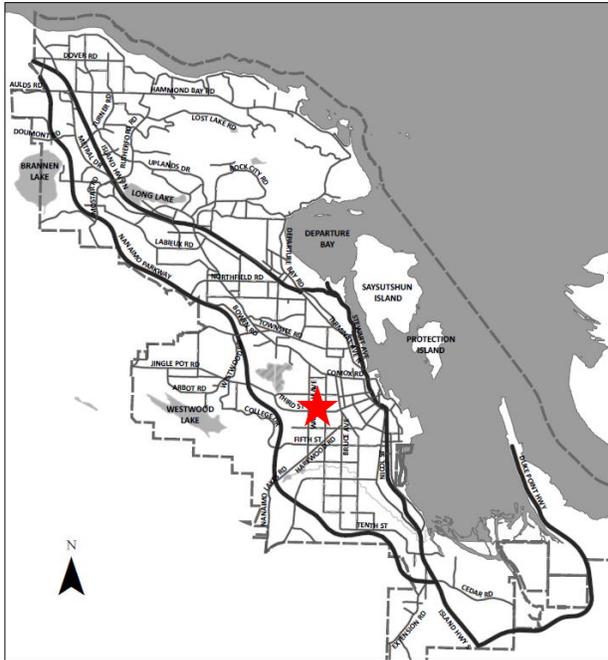


DATE OF MEETING | December 18, 2023

AUTHORED BY | CALEB HORN, PLANNER, CURRENT PLANNING

SUBJECT | **DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1275 – 325
WATFIELD AVENUE**



Proposal:

A 171-unit multi-family residential development

Zoning:

COR2 – Mixed Use Corridor

City Plan Land Use Designation:

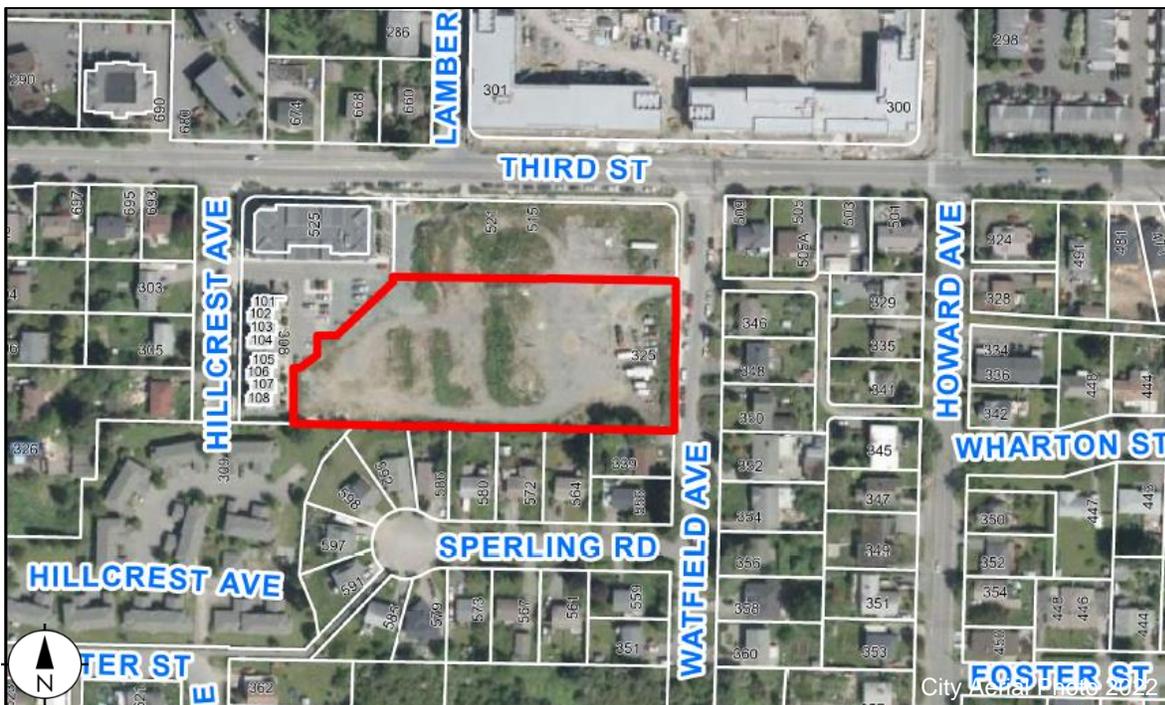
Mixed-Use Corridor

Development Permit Areas:

DPA8 – Form and Character

Lot Area:

9,241m²



OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a multi-family residential development at 325 Watfield Avenue.

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1275 for a multi-family residential development at 325 Watfield Avenue.

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1275, was received from Ironclad Developments Inc. to permit a multi-family residential development with two buildings and a combined total of 171 dwelling units at 325 Watfield Avenue. The site was previously associated with the mixed-use development at 525 Third Street where the first two phases were completed in 2019 and 2020 (DP1049). The subject property was later subdivided from that project in 2022.

The development concept under DP1049 originally included a 218-bed student housing building and 10 residential townhouse units on the portion of the site now addressed as 325 Watfield Avenue, but the current owner is not pursuing this concept and is proposing to replace it through DP1275. Two remaining mixed-use phases of DP1049 are expected to be completed at 515 Third Street, to the north of the development parcel.

Subject Property and Site Context

The subject property is located in the Harewood Neighbourhood. The lot is on the west side of Watfield Avenue just south of Third Street, and is irregularly shaped with an approximate width of 60m and approximate depth of 150m. The site is presently vacant and slopes downhill by approximately 9m from east to west.

The surrounding neighbourhood consists of a mix of residential and commercial uses. Adjacent land uses include townhouses on Hillcrest Avenue to the west (DP1049 Phase 1), a 4-storey mixed-use building to the northwest (DP1049 Phase 2), a 4-storey mixed-use development across Third Street to the north with 181 dwelling units (DP1126), and single residential dwellings to the east along Watfield Avenue and to the south along Sperling Road.

Nearby amenities (and approximate distances from the site) include a recently dedicated and undeveloped park at 361 Howard Avenue (150m southeast), Nanaimo District Secondary School (200m west), the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre (300m west), Fairview Elementary School (400m north), the Nanaimo Ice Centre (450m west), and Vancouver Island University (500m southwest).

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of two 6-storey multi-family rental residential buildings with a combined total of 171 dwelling units. The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	Building 1	Building 2	Total	Approximate Sizes
Studio	5	16	21	35m ²
One-Bedroom	18	45	63	55m ² - 68m ²
Two-Bedroom	34	33	67	80m ² - 92m ²
Three-Bedroom	10	10	20	96m ² - 112m ²
Total	67	104	171	

The proposed gross floor area of Building 1 is 6,244m² and the proposed gross floor area of Building 2 is 8,808m², for a combined total of 15,052m². The total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) will be 1.63, which is below the maximum permitted FAR of 1.70 for this development. The base maximum FAR for the COR2 zone is 1.25 and the applicant is proposing to achieve an additional 0.25 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 80% of the required parking underground.

The applicant is proposing to meet Tier 1 in ‘Schedule D’ by providing amenities including the following:

- electric vehicle (EV) charging stations for 50% of all parking stalls;
- a pedestrian trail across the site for public use;
- exceeding the BC Energy Step Code by one step; and
- educational signage regarding sustainable energy management practices.

Site Design

Building 1 will be sited in the west portion of the lot, parallel with the rear property line. Building 2 will be L-shaped and sited closer to Watfield Avenue. The primary vehicular access to the site will be from a private drive aisle (via reciprocal access agreement) across 525 and 515 Third Street which will connect to Hillcrest Avenue and Watfield Avenue. This access will lead to a small surface parking lot between the two buildings and ramps to two levels of underground parking connecting both buildings. An additional surface parking lot, adjacent to Building 2, will be accessed from Watfield Avenue. All required parking will be provided on-site including 44 surface parking stalls and 172 underground parking stalls. The proposed parking is largely underground and where it is at-grade it is broken into smaller areas next to and behind buildings, in accordance with the General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines (“General Design Guidelines”).

The principal entry for Building 2 will face Watfield Avenue, accessed by a staircase and ramp due to a grade change. A concrete pedestrian path along the north side of Building 2 will connect Watfield Avenue to the principal entry for Building 1 in the interior of the site. An additional future pedestrian connection will be secured from Third Street across 515 Third Street. A public pedestrian trail along the south property line with a minimum width of 2.0m will be secured by a Statutory Right-of-Way (SRW) for a future anticipated connection to Hillcrest Avenue. Private pedestrian connections between the SRW and both buildings are proposed.

Outdoor amenity areas include a patio and children's play area to the south of Building 1, and a rooftop amenity space on the fourth floor of Building 2. Dark-sky compliant bollard lighting is proposed throughout the site along walkways and around amenity spaces. A refuse room is proposed in Building 2 that will open towards the parking lot between both buildings. Short-term bicycle parking is proposed outside of the entries for both buildings, and long-term bicycle parking with a bike repair station is proposed in the lower underground parking level.

Building Design

The proposed buildings are contemporary in design with architectural elements expressing the residential use. Both buildings will feature a rhythm of massing created by framed blocks and recesses to break up the horizontal roofline. The proposed building heights are between 14.0m and 14.3m, below the maximum building height of 18.0m permitted in the COR2 zone for a development with underground parking.

Building 1 (the west building) is 6-storeys in height except for the southernmost portion where it is stepped down to 5-storeys. This building is sited at a 45 degree angle away from the south property line to maximize building separation from neighbouring single residential dwelling properties to the south and 3-storey townhouses to the west. Building 2 (the east building) is 5-storeys in height except on the west elevation, facing the internal parking area, where it presents a 6-storey elevation with the exposed upper parking level. The L-shaped building steps down to 4-storeys on its south wing to reduce overlook to neighbouring properties. The buildings are set back more than 6m from the south side lot line and have minimal openings or balconies facing lower density neighbours, as recommended by the Harewood Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines (the "Harewood Urban Design Guidelines"). All units will include outdoor balconies or patios.

Exterior building materials will consist of different shades of smooth cementitious panel, wood-like lap siding, and manufactured stone cladding. The material palette will be accented by aluminum framed ground-level windows, aluminum railings, and white soffits. The principal entry lobbies of both buildings will be highlighted by two-storey-high windows. Indoor amenity spaces for residents are proposed in both buildings, in addition to the outdoor amenity areas.

Landscape Design

The proposed landscape design distributes planting throughout the site including at the Building 2 entry facing Watfield Avenue, along the public walkway, at the drive aisle entry to the central parking lot, and to the west of Building 1 alongside a stormwater detention area. Trees proposed on-site include a mix of evergreen and deciduous species, with some ornamental types. Along the south property line, a wood fence and low hedge interspersed with Beech trees will provide a screen for the public walkway. Climbing vines (Virginia creeper) are proposed along the south elevations of both buildings to soften views from adjacent rear yards.

The rooftop amenity space on Building 2 will include planter boxes along the southern edge to provide screening and mitigate overlook impacts on adjacent properties. Feature ornamental boulders are proposed to highlight the vehicle entry on Watfield Avenue. Retaining walls will be used to manage grade changes to the west of Building 1 and to the south of Building 2.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2022-JUL-28, accepted DP1275 as presented and provided eight recommendations. The applicant subsequently responded to the DAP recommendations on 2023-JUL-26 as outlined below.

DAP Recommendation	Applicant Response
Consider adding canopies over the main entrances of both building.	The main entries for both buildings have been revised to include 1.2m overhangs.
Consider ways to cover all upper floor balconies.	The uppermost balconies have been revised to include 1.2m overhangs.
Consider ways to increase outdoor amenity space.	The outdoor amenity area between the buildings has been expanded by relocating the refuse enclosure to the upper parking level.
Consider stepping back the height of Building 1 on the southwest corner, in keeping with the neighbourhood plan.	Building 1 originally had a 6-storey massing for its entire length, and the building design has been revised to step down to 5-storeys closest to the south property line.
Consider increasing the density of trees to mitigate the hard surfaces, and add more trees along the pedestrian walkway.	The applicant and landscape architect reviewed options for the landscape buffer and determined that the shrub hedge with interspersed trees was best suited for the site.
Consider ways to reduce hard surfaces by adding more plant material.	More plant materials have been added to the interior of the site with the relocation of the refuse enclosure.
Consider an alternate material for the play area surface.	The applicant considered alternate options for the playground but ultimately decided that a rubberized surfacing was best suited for the site.
Consider moving garbage to the garage.	The refuse area has been relocated indoors.

Staff have accepted the applicant's response to the DAP recommendations, and are of the opinion that the proposed development is in substantial compliance with the applicable General Design Guidelines and the Harewood Urban Design Guidelines. No variances are requested. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit Application No. DP1275 is for a multi-family residential development with two buildings and a combined total of 171 dwelling units at 325 Watfield Avenue.
- The proposed development is in substantial compliance with the applicable General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines and the Harewood Urban Design Guidelines.
- No variances are requested. |

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A:	Permit Conditions
ATTACHMENT B:	Subject Property Map
ATTACHMENT C:	Site and Parking Plans
ATTACHMENT D:	Building Elevations and Details
ATTACHMENT E:	Building Renderings
ATTACHMENT F:	Site Sections
ATTACHMENT G:	Shadow Study
ATTACHMENT H:	Landscape Plan and Details
ATTACHMENT I:	Schedule D – Amenity Requirements for Additional Density

Submitted by:

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Concurrence by:

Jeremy Holm
Director, Planning & Development