

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001350 77 CHAPEL STREET

Applicant: PRIMEX INVESTMENTS LTD.

Architect: DHK ARCHITECTS INC.

Landscape Architect: MDI LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	Chapel Front (DT5)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is bounded by Skinner Street to the west and Chapel Street to the east.
<i>Total Area</i>	4,270m ²
<i>City Plan</i>	Future Land Use Designation – Primary Urban Centre Development Permit Area DPA 8 – Form and Character
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines

The subject property is located at a prominent site in Downtown Nanaimo, located at the intersection of Skinner Street and Chapel Street. The property is irregularly shaped and currently contains a parkade structure. Two previous development permits, DP1117 and DP1256, were previously approved in 2019 and 2023. The design has since changed, and the owner is proceeding with the development. The site slopes downhill significantly from northeast to southwest.

The surrounding neighbourhood contains a variety of uses including mixed-use and multi-family developments, the Nanaimo Law Courts, and a range of commercial uses, including restaurants, retail businesses, and offices within walking distance. Both Maffeo Sutton Park and the Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway are located to the north.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant has proposed to construct a six-storey multi-family residential development with 156 apartment units and six townhouse units, with a combined total of 162 units, intended to include both rental and market housing.

The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	Unit Count
2-Bedroom	29
1-Bedroom	105
Studio	28

The proposed gross floor area is 10,770m² and the total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 2.63, below the maximum permitted FAR of 4.25 in the site-specific DT5 zone.

Site Design

The proposed six-storey building overlooks both Chapel Street and Skinner Street with a pedestrian entrance on Chapel Street. The two-storey townhouses face Skinner Street. Both buildings will be sited parallel to adjacent street frontages and the underground parking structure will be shared between the buildings. The residential building along Chapel Street is setback to facilitate pedestrian circulation around the entirety of the site. Two public outdoor spaces are proposed at either end of the site, taking accessibility and the sloping site into consideration. These areas are enhanced with urban plaza features including formal landscaping, decorative pavers, a variety of outdoor seating options, and lighting. Tiered rain-gardens are proposed along Skinner Street to accommodate stormwater runoff and a turf dog-run is proposed along Chapel Street, adjacent to the public plaza. Features including the frontage of residential units, amenity spaces, designated car-share parking, and public plazas activate the street and nearby public spaces.

Vehicle access is proposed from Skinner Street to the underground parking. The “Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266” (the “Parking Bylaw”) requires 91 parking spaces, three of which must be accessible. Additionally, 81 long-term and 16 short-term bicycle spaces are required. The proposed development exceeds the vehicle and bicycle parking requirements.

Staff Comments:

- A pedestrian network is provided, including public gathering spaces, in accordance with the General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines.
- Consider the addition of shelters for proposed short-term bicycle parking areas.

Building Design

The proposed apartment building, townhouse building, and a two-storey underground parkade are interconnected. The parkade is secured by an overhead entry gate, which is recessed from the sidewalk to avoid pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. The townhouse units have direct pedestrian access to Skinner Street with privacy screening. Materials used for the townhouses complement those of the residential building and include wood-look metal and fiber cement siding in various shades used through the building façades. The apartment building entrance along Chapel Street is prominent and complemented by generous glazing, large entry doors, weather protection, and areas of recess for visual interest. Additional features include wood-look metal fins, articulated rooflines, and projecting balconies with vinyl decking, tempered glass panels, and weather protection. The ground floor incorporates live/work units, amenity space and an office unit, enhancing the street presence of the development. A rooftop amenity is provided, complete with ample outdoor seating, planters, and an outdoor kitchen. The building form is consistent with neighbouring developments and offers continued street presence along Chapel Street and Skinner Street.

Staff Comments:

- Explore way to further incorporate a landmark design component into the north elevation of building in accordance with the Downtown Urban Design Plan and Guidelines as this corner will be highly visible from many vantage points throughout downtown.
- The building design relates to public streets with setbacks to facilitate pedestrian areas and the design is well-integrated into the context of the streetscape, in accordance with the applicable design guidelines.

- Consider the addition of green roofs or decorative rooftop treatment on townhouses to enhance views from overlooking units and ensure adequate screening of rooftop equipment.

Landscape Design

The proposed landscaping includes both hardscaping and softscape elements. Hardscaping includes pedestrian walkways with various types of pavers, sitting walls, and landscape boulders. A variety of outdoor seating types are proposed throughout the site adjacent to softscape areas, which include a variety of flowering perennials, hedges, and trees to reintroduce vegetation to the site. The northern plaza will include a large flowering focal tree (Galaxy Magnolia) among Garry Oaks and Milky Way Kousa Dogwoods.

Staff Comments:

- Ensure the public plaza areas and pedestrian network are well-lit.
- Retaining walls should receive high-quality finishing and/or be concealed by cascading vegetation.