

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001356 – 6124 METRAL DRIVE

Applicant/Architect: JOYCE REID TROOST ARCHITECTURE

Owner: CASTERA PROPERTIES INC.

Landscape Architect: CALID SERVICES LTD.

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Zoning</i>	Residential Corridor (COR1)
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located north of Turner Road at the intersection of Metral Drive and Dunbar Road
<i>Total Area</i>	0.64 ha
<i>City Plan (OCP)</i>	Future Land Use Designation: Residential Corridor Development Permit Area DPA8 – Form and Character
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

The subject property is a large rectangular residential lot located in North Nanaimo adjacent to the Metral Drive complete street, a multi-modal transportation corridor with transit service, sidewalks, and a cycling pathway. The property is within walking distance to services and is well connected to the Woodgrove Secondary Urban Centre. The grade change of the property is approximately 15m and slopes down to Metral Drive. The property currently contains two dwellings. Established single family dwellings, multiple family developments, commercial uses, Pleasant Valley Elementary School, and a park predominantly characterize the surrounding area.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing to construct two multi-family residential apartment buildings – a five-storey building fronting Metral Drive with 59 units (Building A) and a four-storey building at the rear of the site with 30 units (Building B). The proposed total gross floor area is 7,471m² and the proposed total Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.16 (base far of 1.0 + up to 0.25 Schedule D Tier 1 density).

The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	No. of Units (Building A)	No. of Units (Building B)	Floor Area
Studio	0	18	51m ²
1-Bedroom	30	6	61m ² – 65m ²
2-Bedroom	28	6	74m ² – 101m ²
3-Bedroom	1	0	162m ²
<i>Total:</i>	89 Units		

Site Design

The proposed buildings are rectangular shaped with Building A fronting on Metral Drive and Building B at the rear of the lot adjacent to two statutory rights-of-way (SRW) which includes a 7m wide lane and a 2m wide sidewalk secured as conditions of rezoning (RA485). The main entrance for Building A connects to Metral Drive with the main access to Building B accessed from the pedestrian SRW. Vehicle parking consists of 115 parking spaces, with one level of partially underground parking under Building A with 46 spaces and the remaining spaces as under-building or surface parking. Long-term bicycle storage (45 spaces) and 6 electric scooters will be located within a secure room in Building

A at grade with Metral Drive and short-term bicycle racks (9 spaces) are located beside both buildings. Three-stream waste management containers for both buildings are located in a room at the back of Building A. Public art is proposed to be provided as a Schedule D amenity.

Staff Comments:

- Consider opportunities to incorporate a direct pedestrian connection from the townhouse unit to Metral Drive.
- Relocate parking spaces adjacent to the underground parking entrance to Building A to reduce potential vehicle conflicts.
- Consider ways to increase the visibility of the entry of Building B such as incorporating a larger pedestrian plaza and relocating the short-term bicycle rack to the front of entrance.

Building Design

The rectilinear buildings are contemporary in design with flat roofs. The exterior finishes of the buildings include a mix of fibre cement sidings including panel, board and batten, lap siding, and wood-look fibre, as well as windows with black frames. The balconies are clad with fibre cement panels or glazing.

Staff Comments:

- Consider different accent colours to differentiate the buildings.
- Consider ways to address blank walls on the north side of Building B.
- Consider weather protection for uppermost balconies.
- Consider additional opportunities to reduce overlook and shadowing on adjacent dwellings.

Landscape Design

The proposed development includes clearing the existing vegetation except for the southeast corner of the site (which will retain a stand of mature trees) and planting various deciduous and coniferous trees, shrubs, groundcover, vines, and edible perennials (blueberries and strawberries). Conifer hedges are proposed for screening. Private balconies (and a patio for the townhouse) are provided for each unit and common amenities include a deck oriented toward Metral Drive at the front of Building A.

Staff Comments:

- Consider opportunities to increase landscaping and trees at the rear of the site to screen the parking area.
- Consider provision of outdoor seating near building entrances and along pedestrian pathways.
- Provide pedestrian scale lighting along the pathways and throughout the site, ensuring no spillage into the units or adjacent properties.

Proposed Variances

Retaining Wall (Fence) Height

The maximum height of a retaining wall in a side yard in the COR1 zone is 1.8m. The applicant is proposing a 2.51m retaining wall in the north side yard and a 2.8m retaining wall in the south side yard, a requested variance of 0.71m and 1m respectively.

Building Height

The maximum height of a principal building in the COR1 zone is 14m. The applicant is proposing a height of approximately 15m for Building A, a requested variance of 1m.

Landscape Buffer

A minimum required landscape buffer is 1.8m. The applicant is proposing a minimum landscape buffer of 1.0m along a portion of the rear (east) lot line, a requested variance of 0.8m.

Off-Street Parking

The required number of parking spaces is 121. The applicant is proposing 115 parking spaces, a requested variance of 6 parking spaces. Additionally, the applicant is proposing an increased percentage of small spaces from a maximum of 40% to a maximum of 50%.