



## MINUTES

### DESIGN ADVISORY PANEL MEETING

Thursday, November 14, 2024, 5:13 P.M.  
Boardroom, Service and Resource Centre,  
411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC

Present: Marie Leduc, Chair\*  
Councillor Eastmure  
Hector Alcalá, AIBC\*  
Jonathan Behnke, BCSLA/CSLA\*  
Angie Boileau, At Large\*  
Harry Law, At Large\*

Absent: Kevin Krastel, At Large

Staff: P. Carter, Planner, Current Planning\*  
K. Mayes, Planner, Current Planning\*  
A. Bullen, Steno, Current Planning  
C. Chee, Recording Secretary

#### 1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER:

The Design Advisory Panel Meeting was called to order at 5:13 p.m.

#### 2. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

It was moved and seconded that the Agenda be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Design Advisory Panel meeting held in the Boardroom of the Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Thursday, 2024-OCT-10 at 5:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

\* Denotes electronic meeting participation as authorized by "Council Procedure Bylaw 2018 No. 7272"

It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the Design Advisory Panel meeting held in the Boardroom of the Service and Resource Centre, 411 Dunsmuir Street, Nanaimo, BC, on Thursday, 2024-OCT-24 at 5:00 p.m. be adopted. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **4. PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **a. Development Permit Application No. DP0001357 - 5180 Universal Place**

Introduced by Payton Carter, Planner, Current Planning.

##### **Presentations:**

1. Peter Atkinson, Architect, Human Studio Architecture and Urban Design Ltd., presented the neighbourhood context, site characteristics, building renderings and elevations, building materials, site plans, future site access, project data, requested variances, and architectural features. Highlights included:
  - On-site parking is located adjacent to the development, creating a pedestrian-only courtyard that enhances safety
  - The development is located near Ocean View Park and is set within a forested area with ocean views available from many of the units
  - A central amenity building is included, featuring a communal kitchen, dining room, and a children's play area
  - Two courtyards are provided, connected by a staircase, offering shared outdoor spaces for residents
  - All units have direct access to the courtyards
  - The site is designed with elevators for accessibility, supporting intergenerational living
  - The development is designed with low visual impact, with only a small portion visible from Laguna Way
  - The design rationale emphasizes central streets leading directly to front doors, with open front porches facing the forest, allowing for visual and physical connection to the forest and nearby trails. A large portion of the forest will remain intact
  - The roof form allows for individual expression, making it easy for residents to identify their homes
  - The design uses a red earth-toned colour palette and wood finishes

2. Cara MacDonald, Landscape Architect, MacDonald Gray Consultants, provided an overview of the landscape plan. Highlights included:

- The site retains 40% of existing trees and vegetation
- Ground-level planting is incorporated around both Level 2 of Building A and B
- The slope leading to the courtyard will be landscaped
- Planters at Building C will provide natural separation between decks, enhancing privacy
- A community garden is featured at the base of the slope

Panel discussion took place. Highlights included:

- Discussion highlighted the positive outcomes of cohousing, particularly its social benefits and community-building potential
- The development features a distinctive design, which complements the surrounding context
- The landscaping was noted as being well-designed
- Lack of vehicle access and surrounding transportation options may pose challenges for larger families
- The trail leading to the community garden could benefit from additional natural play elements
- Consider adding more shade trees along the perimeter of the lot
- Construction of a community garden may be difficult for residents due to the site being on a slope
- Clarification on bike parking was provided
- Consider adding a bike rail along one of the stair routes
- Noted that the proposed development brings more multi-family and accessible housing options to the area
- Consider adding visual interest to the roof of the amenity building
- Consider more windows to break up large, blank walls
- Potentially implementing a car-share program
- Concerns regarding the location of the refuse area and the potential difficulty for residents to transport their garbage from their units
- Consider the addition of an outdoor play area within the community garden

It was moved and seconded that Development Permit Application No. DP001357 - 5180 Universal Place be accepted as presented, with support for the proposed variances. The following recommendations were provided:

- Consider adding an outdoor play area;
- Consider adding shade trees on the perimeter of the parking lot;
- Consider constructing the community garden during the construction phase;
- Consider adding a bike rail on the stairs for easy bike access to the lower levels of the property;
- Consider adding green roofs or other additions to improve the view of rooftops from the upper buildings; and,
- Consider more handicapped parking to accommodate the number of accessible suites.

The motion carried unanimously.

b. Development Permit Application No. DP0001360 - 3425 Uplands Drive

Introduced by Kristine Mayes, Planner, Current Planning.

Presentations:

1. Jackson Low, Architect, Low Hammond Rowe Architects, and Selena Kwok, Architect, Low Hammond Rowe Architects, presented the neighbourhood context, site characteristics, building renderings and elevations, building materials, site plans, future site access, project data, requested variances, and architectural features. Highlights included:
  - The property has been subdivided, retaining the existing single-family homes, while the remaining area will be developed into a multi-family project following completion of the rezoning application (RA501)
  - Unit types include studios and one-bedroom
  - A Public Information Meeting for the rezoning application was held on 2024-APR-24, with neighbouring residents expressing their support of the project
  - Existing surface parking will be extended with 25 parking spaces proposed for this phase (for a total of 42 parking spaces)

- The height of the development is not noticeable from the street level
- The lower-level patios will leave a portion of the site untouched to reduce the development's overall impact
- The lower floor is partially underground and will include utilities and an amenity space with direct access to a common patio area
- All lower-level units will have direct access to a private patio area
- The floor plans are designed to be simple and compact, reducing the environmental impact and enhancing energy efficiency
- Window shrouds will be incorporated to help prevent overheating and meet step code requirements
- Bay windows will be used to add visual interest and highlight the facade
- The peak of the roof is situated over the elevator shaft
- A neutral colour palette has been chosen, along with horizontal panel siding and vertical wood siding, to complement the natural surroundings and existing buildings
- Cutout, overhangs, and window shrouds will add depth and provide sunshade
- A high planter wall and screening will be installed at the entryway of the units to ensure privacy for residents
- The roof slopes to minimize the height of the development
- The public pedestrian path will eventually form part of a network
- Mechanical infrastructure, including small heat pumps will be installed in each unit

2. Kate Stefiuk, Landscape Architect, Kinship, presented the landscape plans. Highlights included:

- The landscape design is inspired by the existing natural surroundings
- Indigenous plant species will be used throughout the site. The plant palette includes low groundcovers, medium shrubs, and trees including Douglas firs
- The rain garden will include a seating area and will be fully accessible to all residents via elevators

- An existing stairwell will provide temporary access to the public pedestrian path
- The lower-level patio is designed as a sunken space, creating a cozy, intimate tree garden area
- The retaining walls are consistent with the design of the first phase of the project, tying the new development into the existing development and surrounding forest

Panel discussion took place. Highlights included:

- The proposed project integrates well with the first phase of development
- The roof design was praised for its thoughtful execution and overall quality
- The units with patios have been designed to prioritize privacy
- Discussion regarding the possibility of connecting the lower-level patio to the broader pathway network
- Clarification was provided regarding access to the common area from the parking level
- Clarification was provided regarding the visibility of the mechanical systems
- Weather protection over the patios was suggested to improve comfort for residents
- Discussion regarding bird-friendly window glazing
- Concerns were raised regarding the choice of a pure white colour for the building's exterior, as it may not hold up well in the region's humid climate, potentially encouraging moss and ivy growth

It was moved and seconded that Development Permit Application No. DP001360 - 3425 Uplands Drive be accepted as presented, with support for the proposed variances. The following recommendations were provided:

- Ensure that mechanical units fit well with the exterior presentation of the building;
- Consider adding weather protection over the patios; and,
- Consider adding small tables in the outdoor amenity area.

The motion carried unanimously.

**5. ADJOURNMENT:**

It was moved and seconded at 6:19 p.m. that the meeting adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

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CHAIR

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RECORDING SECRETARY