STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001375 – 210 CALEDONIA AVENUE

Applicant / Architect: RAYMOND DE BEELD ARCHITECT INC.

Owner: MILL BROOK PLACE INC.

Landscape Architect: KINSHIP DESIGN ART ECOLOGY

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

Zoning	Medium Density Residential (R8); Three and Four Unit Residential (R5); and Residential Corridor – Interim Corridor Area (COR1)
Location	The subject property is located on the east side of Caledonia Avenue south of Mt Benson Street, adjacent to the Millstone River.
Lot Area	6,305m^2 (*4,112m^2 R8-zoned portion*)
City Plan (OCP)	Future Land Use Designation – Neighbourhood Development Permit Area DPA1 – Environmentally Sensitive Areas Development Permit Area DPA2 – Hazardous Slopes Development Permit Area DPA8 – Form and Character
Relevant Design Guidelines	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; and Newcastle and Brechin Neighbourhood Plan – Urban Design Framework and Guidelines (the "Newcastle + Brechin Guidelines")

The subject property is presently vacant and located at the edge of the Newcastle Neighbourhood, near the south end of Caledonia Avenue which is a no-exit street. The property is split-zoned and made up of 9 legal lots to be consolidated as a condition of the DP. The site is steeply sloping, dropping from an elevation of 30m in the west to 6m in the east adjacent to the Millstone River. There is an existing terraced area in the centre of the R8-zoned portion of the site above the 20m contour. A decommissioned driveway crosses the property and descends the bank towards the river. Historically, the property contained a power plant from the early 1900s and later the site was used for propane storage. Existing building foundations remain in the eastern part of the property next to the river while the remainder of the site has become overgrown and is now moderately vegetated.

The majority of the site falls within the City of Nanaimo's 30m watercourse setback which is measured from the top-of-bank above the Millstone River. Additionally, a portion at the south end of the property falls within the Provincial 15m Streamside Protection and Enhancement Area (SPEA) which is measured from the high water mark of the river. A previous DP for a multi-family residential project was approved in 2009 (DP490) and would have allowed development 15m from the high water mark, however, this project was never constructed and the DP subsequently lapsed.

The surrounding neighbourhood consists of recreational, institutional, and residential land uses. Adjacent properties include Caledonia Park and the railway across Caledonia Avenue to the west, a fourplex and multi-family residential buildings to the north, a motel on Terminal Avenue to the

northeast, a five-storey multi-family residential building with 90 dwelling units across the Millstone River to the southeast (20 Barsby Avenue, completed 2021), and a private school to the south (formerly the German Cultural Club). Just south of the subject site at the end of Caledonia Avenue is a pedestrian bridge that provides an active transportation connection to Downtown Nanaimo. Nearby commercial services are available along Terminal Avenue, 100m northeast of the site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is a six-storey multi-family residential building with 98 dwelling units and underground parking. The proposed unit composition is as follows:

Unit Type	*Number of Units*	*Approximate Unit Floor Area*
Studio	13	44m^2
One-Bedroom	79	57m^2 – 83m^2
Two-Bedroom	4	97m^2
Three-Bedroom	2	99m^2

The proposed gross floor area is 7,561m^2 and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.84 based on the R8-zoned portion of the site. This applicant is proposing to achieve a maximum allowable FAR of 1.84 in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw by providing 96% of parking underground and by providing amenities per 'Schedule D – Amenity Requirements for Additional Density'. Some of the proposed amenities include:

- Provision of a carshare vehicle;
- Electric scooter parking;
- A green roof; and
- Exceeding the BC Energy Step Code by one step.

Site Design

The building footprint is constrained by site features (such as the existing slope, Provincial SPEA, geotechnical setback, etc.), and the proposed development will be sited on the R8-zoned portion of the site. The existing terraced area is proposed to be excavated for two levels of underground parking. The building orientation is angled to follow the existing contours and will be closer to Caledonia Street at the south end.

Vehicle access will be from a driveway connecting Caledonia Avenue to the upper parking level, and an external ramp will connect the two levels of parking. All required parking is proposed on-site with 54 parking spaces on the lower parking level, 49 parking spaces on the upper parking level, and 5 surface-level visitor parking spaces adjacent to the driveway, for a total of 108 spaces. All required long-term and short-term bicycle parking is proposed on-site, as well as a bike wash station. A waste collection room is proposed in the building just outside of the parking level entrance.

Pedestrian access to the site will be via a large patio connected to the principal entrance on the west side of the building, facing Caledonia Avenue. The patio will act as a shared outdoor amenity space at the base of a natural slope, with seating and a secondary trail connection to the top of the hill on Caledonia Avenue. Additional outdoor amenity spaces are proposed on the east side of the building and on the roof of the parking ramp as a river-viewing deck. Retaining walls will

provide a terraced transition between the building footprint and the existing slope towards the Millstone River. While a variance is required for the City of Nanaimo watercourse setback, no encroachment into the Provincial SPEA is proposed.

Staff Comments:

- Consider locating the long-term bicycle parking on the upper parking level closer to the entry.

Building Design

The building design is residential in nature with generous balconies and patios for individual units. Units are oriented around a double-loaded corridor, with most units facing either west towards Caledonia Avenue or east towards the Millstone River. The building massing steps back above the fourth storey on the south elevation and on the north elevation, closest to the neighbouring fourplex. A strong roofline above the fourth storey will emphasize the four-storey massing. Taking into account the grade change, when viewed from the high point of Caledonia Avenue the building will present a four-storey elevation.

The ground-level entryway will have a canopy brick veneer exterior cladding to emphasize the lower level of the building. Other materials will include different shades of fiber cement panels and lap siding. Wood-like siding above the entry will help draw attention to the entrance. The uppermost two floors are proposed to have a lighter shade of cement panels to deemphasize the building above the fourth storey.

Staff Comments:

- Explore ways to visually divide the long horizontal building mass and roofline.
- Look at opportunities to further step back the building on the street-facing west elevation, in accordance with the Newcastle + Brechin Guidelines for six-storey buildings.
- Consider a more natural colour palette to help incorporate the building with the surrounding natural context.
- Incorporate bird-friendly design for glass deck railings.
- Provide screening for rooftop mechanical equipment.

Landscape Design

Significant landscaping is proposed throughout the site with principal planting areas being on the slope along Caledonia Avenue north of the front entry, around the private patios, on the river-viewing amenity deck, and below the retaining walls. Stormwater runoff will be managed through a ditch on the south side of the surface parking that will connect with an existing outlet to the Millstone River. The remainder of the site outside of the development area will be retained and protected within the private property as a vegetation management area for natural habitat restoration, in accordance with the guidelines for Development Permit Area DPA1 – Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

Seating is proposed in the shared outdoor amenity areas, and a large feature arbour is proposed on the river-viewing amenity deck to provide shade and space for climbing vines to grow. Outdoor lighting will consist of a mix of overhead pole lights and recessed wall lights. A black metal picket

fence is proposed along the Caledonia Avenue property line north of the building entrance, and the required wood post and rail fence is proposed along the SPEA setback in the rear.
Staff Comments:

- Consider opportunities for landscape screening in planters above the fourth storey on the north elevation to mitigate overlook and soften the building step-back.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

Minimum Front Yard Setback

The minimum required front yard setback in the R8 zone is 6.0m. The proposed front yard setback is 1.9m, a requested variance of 4.1m.

Minimum Rear Yard Setback

The minimum required rear yard setback is 10.5m in the R8 zone and 7.5m in the R5 zone. The proposed rear yard setback is 1.6m on the R8-zoned portion of the site and 1.8m on the R5-zoned portion (for the parking ramp), requested variances of 8.9m and 5.7m respectively.

Maximum Building Height

The maximum permitted building height in the R8 zone is 14.0m. The proposed building height is 20.8m, a requested variance of 6.8m.

Maximum Retaining Wall Height

The maximum permitted combined height of a fence and retaining wall in the rear yard setback is 2.4m. The proposed retaining walls reach a height of up to 2.85m in the rear yard, a requested variance of 0.45m.

Minimum Required Landscape Treatment Level

The minimum required landscape treatment in the rear yard of an R8-zoned property is a buffer width of 1.8m. The proposed buffer width is 0.0m, a requested variance of 1.8m.

Minimum Watercourse Setback

The minimum required watercourse setback from the top-of-bank above the Millstone River is 30m. The proposed watercourse setback is 0m, a requested variance of 30m. The proposed variance will align the City's setback with the Provincial SPEA. The watercourse setback variance request is undergoing a technical environmental review under DPA1.