

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP001396 309 HILLCREST AVENUE

Applicant: TL HOUSING SOLUTIONS LTD.

Architect: CHRISTINE LINTOTT ARCHITECTS INC.

Landscape Architect: LANARC

SUBJECT PROPERTY AND SITE CONTEXT

<i>Current Zoning</i>	COR1 – Residential Corridor
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located at the intersection of Wakesiah Avenue and Foster Street, east of Vancouver Island University.
<i>Total Area</i>	1.14ha
<i>City Plan</i>	Future Land Use Designation – Mixed-Use Corridor Development Permit Area DPA 8 – Form and Character
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	Form & Character Design Guidelines

The subject property is located in the Harewood Neighbourhood and entirely flat. The site is currently developed as subsidized housing with 34 units, and the surrounding neighbourhood is characterized by low-density and multi-family medium-density housing, Vancouver Island University, the Nanaimo Ice Centre, the Nanaimo Aquatic Centre and the Stadium District recreation facilities.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant proposes to construct a multi-family development with 160 units in three four-storey buildings. A variety of unit types are proposed, including studio, one, two, and three-bedroom units ranging in size from 36m² to 87m². The total proposed Gross Floor Area (GFA) is 11,278m² and the proposed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is 1.00, which aligns with the permitted FAR of the COR1 zone.

Site Design

The site is accessed from the south end of Hillcrest Avenue leading to a large surface parking area that wraps around the north and east portions of the site. A secondary access is proposed from Foster Street to provide vehicle access to the visitor parking area at the south end of Building B and C. Building A abuts Wakesiah Avenue, while Building B and C are centrally located on the site. A multi-use path is proposed to connect Hillcrest Avenue to the intersection of Foster Street and Wakesiah Avenue. An area on the north side of Building C adjacent to the multi-use path is designated for three-stream waste management.

The “Off-Street Parking Regulations Bylaw 2018 No. 7266” (the “Parking Bylaw”) requires 188 parking spaces (at a rate of 0.90 spaces per studio, 1.07 spaces per 1-bedroom unit, 1.44 spaces per two-bedroom unit, and 1.68 spaces per three-bedroom unit). 111 parking spaces are provided, of which 3 spaces must be designated accessible and five must be designated as visitor spaces.

Staff Comments:

- Consider opportunities for under-building or underground parking. Surface parking should include pedestrian crossings and pathways (e.g. raised or textured surfaces) through the parking area (2.1.3.8).
- The proposed earth bins for solid waste should be fully screened from view with a non-combustible solid enclosure and gate that complements the building design and meets CPTED principles (2.4.3.1). The bins should be adequately sized and centrally located for residents in all three buildings.
- Consider adding pedestrian connections from ground-level units to the central path between Building B and C, as well as from the surface parking area to the east side of Building C (2.1.2.1).

Building Design

The proposed buildings are contemporary with a flat roof design and a simple exterior cornice design. Exterior finishes include smooth and contoured cementitious siding in a colour blocking pattern with neutral tones unique to each building. Exterior balconies are provided with painted steel railings and a symmetrical glazing pattern. The main building entries face internally to the site are weather protected with canopies. Long-term bicycle parking is proposed inside each building in a dedicated storage room adjacent to the building entrance.

Staff Comments:

- To support placemaking, buildings should incorporate landmark or emblematic design features, such as prominent vertical elements, use of colour, significant corner treatments, plazas, and extensions of the public realm (3.3.1.2). Consider way to further distinguish each building and provide more prominent building entries for increased visual interest and to improve wayfinding.
- Consider the addition of pedestrian entries the west façade of Building A, fronting Wakesiah Avenue and adjacent to the central patio abutting Building B.
- Horizontal overhangs should be provided in varying depths to add visual interest and differentiate between buildings (3.3.1.5)
- Consider larger unit sizes to accommodate families.
- All mechanical rooftop equipment should be integrated into the design of a building and screened from view (2.2.2.1).
- Consider providing balconies facing Wakesiah Avenue to establish street-connections and increase visual interest (3.3.3.2).

Landscape Design

A cedar fence and landscape buffer border the site and a number of trees are proposed to be retained throughout the site, supplemented by a variety of deciduous and coniferous trees. A number of raingardens are proposed throughout the site to facilitate stormwater management and decorative permeable pavers are used to identify the visitor parking area, central patio, and at building entrances. A central courtyard is located between Building B and C that connects the main building entrances to the surface parking areas. Short-term bicycle parking is proposed at building entrances and outdoor seating, including benches, tables, and seat walls are proposed at the central patio.

Staff Comments:

- Consider the addition of landscaped islands and permeable paving in the resident surface parking areas (2.1.3.9).

- Incorporate landscape features that users can interact with and that reinforce placemaking (2.4.1.3).
- Consider the addition of an outdoor amenity space programmed for intentional use (2.1.4.1)

PROPOSED VARIANCE

Minimum Required Off-Street Parking

The required number of parking spaces is 188. The applicant is proposing 111 parking spaces, a requested variance of 77 spaces.