

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
March 3, 2021, at 3:00 pm

Chair: Keith Davidoff

Present: Illarion Gallant, Greg Gillespie, Jacy Lee, Erica Sangster, Megan Walker

Regrets: Colin Harper; Nicholas Standeven

Staff: Gina Lyons, Current Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00. p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by J. Lee and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on January 20, 2021, be adopted.”

CARRIED

3977 Rainbow Street, 812 and 822 Sevenoaks Road

Application by 3977 Rainbow Developments Ltd. (Abstract Developments Ltd.). Development permit and rezoning application to rezone from the RS-6 (Single Family Dwelling) Zone to a new Comprehensive zone to construct a 25-unit townhouse project.

Legal Description: Lot 20, Block 3, Section 49, Victoria District, Plan 1178
Lot A, Section 49, Victoria District, Plan 1178
Lot B, Section 49, Victoria District, Plan 1178

Planning File: DPR00789; REZ00662
Planner: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The subject site is within the Quadra Local Area, just south of McKenzie Avenue. Rainbow Park is across Rainbow Street to the west.
- The properties are also within the Swan Lake Development Permit Area, which contains policy for retaining major and significant wooded areas and native vegetation wherever possible. Trees should be retained as part of the overall landscape design.
- Variances are proposed for lot coverage, setback, parking, visitor parking, and disability parking.
- Planning is seeking comments about the proposed setbacks from the street, the on-site vehicle and pedestrian circulation and the proposed developments adherence to the Swan Lake Development Permit Area policies.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Planner stated:

- The Planning Department has determined that this project would fit best within the RT-WA (Attached Housing Whittier Avenue) Zone based on use and density.
- Staff anticipate that a lot coverage variance will be required; however, additional information is required to determine the variance's extent.
- Regarding setbacks, a variance of .56 m for a setback is required for buildings for attached housing from a lot line that abuts a street; the proposed is 2.44 m; the required setback is 3.0 m. A variance of .34 m for a setback required for buildings for attached housing from a rear lot line, the proposed is 3.66 m; the required is 4.0 m.
- Section 7 of the Bylaw outlines parking, loading and class 1 and 2 bicycle stalls requirements.
- The application is proposing a parking variance. The Official Community Plan contains policy to consider parking variances in select locations based on the adjacency of a centre and the availability of public and other modes of transportation.
- When parking variances are requested, a traffic impact analysis is requested to be submitted. The applicant has submitted the analysis, Engineering has reviewed it and has no concerns.

Comments from applicant /owner:

N. Standeven, Senior Development Manager, Abstract Developments; Greg Voot, Architect, RLA, Bev Windjack, Landscape Architect, LADR; presented to the Panel:

- This site is within proximity to several major centres, just outside of Uptown and the main heart of Quadra/McKenzie village.
- There is an inspiration for a lot of growth and densification from the McKenzie corridor for larger, more complex multi-family projects in the mid-rise form of development directly on the corridor.
- There is an opportunity to fill out and densify the corridor and develop a language into the single-family neighbourhoods and add more missing middle, ground-oriented townhomes, which is currently missing from our housing stock.
- In order to meet the growing demand for homes in our region, it is estimated that 600 new homes will be required annually.
- This project is a three lot consolidation immediately adjacent to Rainbow Park and a nature sanctuary, right in the middle of an urban area.
- A bird's eye view of the area locates the site within the initial first layer from the McKenzie corridor. Immediately across Rainbow Street to the west is a large, substantial park.
- The neighbourhood character is single-family, which is what determined our target of the missing middle housing typology. There is also a very important pedestrian connection.
- Many homes as are possible are oriented towards the park.
- As part of the frontage upgrades, a new pedestrian crossing across Rainbow Street to the park is proposed.
- An upgrade to existing frontage conditions also includes curbs, landscaped boulevards and on-street parking for two cars.
- Working with Saanich staff, it was decided that the entrance will be on the site's south side on Sevenoaks Road, a safe distance from the intersection.
- Buildings are arranged in a pinwheel pattern, four buildings in total.
- Parking is at a 1:1.54 ratio. Ten townhouses will have double car garages, ten will have single car garages, and nine parking stalls will be provided for residents and visitor use.
- To create vertical separation from the sidewalk, the private terraces are raised and provide private outdoor space for residents.
- Trees located around the perimeter will be retained.
- The strata lane is shared, the community node at the entrance will have bike parking.

- Landscape gardens will feature a boulder retaining wall along Rainbow Street, 1.2 m high cedar screen fence with a gate, decorative concrete unit pavers, adaptive ornamental grasses and shrubs, a garden wall at the patio, and 1.8 m high divider panels.
- The front garden on Rainbow Street has a .45 m wide river rock maintenance border, irregular concrete paving, decorative river stone with boulders artfully placed, a 1.2 m high cedar screen fence with a gate, adaptive ornamental grasses and shrubs, decorative concrete unit pavers and 1.8 m high cedar privacy panels.
- Around the perimeter, there will be a six-foot-high cedar fence.
- Type A townhouse is three storeys, with three bedrooms and a two-car garage. Living areas are on the second floor and bedrooms on the top floor. The townhouses are designed to be interlocked and provide a slim design. The living space includes an outdoor deck. Type B is slightly narrower and smaller. Type E, available in the rear building, is similar but slightly larger and with a single car garage. The townhomes in the rear building have dens and storage rooms at the back; some will be underground.
- The architectural character is a pleasant mix of Victorian references; the dorms are steeply pitched and vary in size, the dormers maintain a similar feeling. The bays are treated with more traditional detailing and will give each home more individual expression.
- Some of the larger bays extend to the ground and are supported by brick bases.
- The front doors are proposed to be different colours to be playful, strengthening the individual character.
- The south elevation presents in a smaller four-plex format; this reduces the mass of the buildings and creates a more friendly scale along the street.
- The homes are slightly raised at the east end.
- Building 3, at the back of the site, is longer. This has been addressed by stepping forward the middle section and breaking the roof lines.
- A similar treatment of Victorian bays and colourful doors are proposed to enhance this quiet residential street character.
- The rear of Building 3 will only be two storeys at the northeast corner to make up the grade change and preserve the natural grade in this area. The homes on the west end will have dens, and the units on the east end will have storage rooms that are underground.
- The colours reflect the contemporary taste of white and gray. This simple palette sets the perfect backdrop for a variety of entry door colours. The windows are black and add a crisp contrast to the white exterior finishes. The window bays are charcoal and have distinct diagonal siding panels. The brick will be painted white and will be used on the front entry columns and chimney columns.
- Townhomes will be ground-oriented and will have front yards and individual access from the new sidewalk, providing more housing diversity and neighbourhood character.
- These frontages will help activate the pedestrian streetscape and bring more “eyes on the street”, improving security, safety, and community connection.
- The property is located along established transportation routes that support alternative active transportation opportunities for commuters and recreational activity.
- Cash in lieu payment for the remainder of the sidewalk along Sevenoaks Road is being proposed as a community contribution amenity.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Applicant stated:

- The garbage and recycling receptacles will be kept in garages. The strata will organize the garbage collection.

- There is a substantial grade change in the northeast corner; the homes closest to the west (units 10, 11 and 12) will have a private outdoor space that is flush to grade. All of the homes will have private outdoor space.
- A shadow study is not included as part of the application package.
- A longer building for Building 3 is appropriate simply because the context around the area is changing rapidly. There was a consideration at introducing a building break, but we ultimately liked the interplay of the different building lengths.

Comments from the Panel:

- This type of housing relates to the current housing needs in Saanich.
- These are generously sized homes with an emphasis on family homes.
- Admire the typology, the variety and form of composition.
- Concern was expressed about pedestrian safety with shared use of the entrance with people heading back to Building 3.
- Appreciate the sense of entry and landscape features for Buildings 1 and 2; that sense of entry is missing from Building 3, which is such a stark contrast.
- The laybys are creative and perhaps alleviate any congestion when it comes to visitor parking.
- There are a couple of different sets of stairs on the northern property line. Some are shown parallel to the north side elevation; they form some of the private outdoor space. Some stairs are running in the east/west direction, providing ongoing maintenance access and not a main entry to the homes.
- This design feels like a lot of units crammed onto a site.
- Appreciate the grade change's use to contribute to the setback experience, the street orientation, the interface for the street for buildings 1 and 2, break up of massing, the range of languages with the texture and detail.
- Share desire to see more landscape at the entry drive and Building 3.
- The setbacks are just barely enough, they are tight, but with the rise in grade, they are fairly successful.
- The experience of Building 3 and the northern neighbours is questionable. Consideration should have been given to having two buildings versus one long building. From the neighbour's perspective, there is no green development. What little greenery there is will be down behind a retaining wall. There is no privacy screening. Consideration should be given to looking at some of the privacy spaces and integrating some trees to provide softening to the northern façade.
- Interesting detail design to the patios and grade, the patios are very small, almost Juliet style and gesture a connection to the street.
- When looking at the cross-section, a lot is being proposed in a very narrow setback. It is very well detailed and will have to be very well constructed to work.
- Some really narrow trees between Buildings 1 and 2 would create a gateway experience.
- The front entrance and the facing of Buildings 1, 2 and 4 are gentle and generous.
- The way the trees are spaced in the boulevard creates a sense of lightness and openness.
- The street-facing layout is thoughtfully planned out; it is a satisfying street frontage.

MOVED by M. Walker and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a 25 unit townhouse project at 3977 Rainbow Street, 812 and 822 Sevenoaks Road be approved subject to consideration of:

- 1. The addition of trees to the north edge of Building 3;**
- 2. Breaking up the massing of Building 3; and**
- 3. A stronger sense of entry with more landscape at the driveway entry.”**

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY