

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via MS Teams
August 18, 2021, at 3:02 pm

A/Chair: Greg Gillespie

Present: Illarion Gallant, Colin Harper, Jacy Lee, Megan Walker, and Janine Wigmore

Regrets: Keith Davidoff, Erica Sangster, and Nicholas Standeven

Staff: Megan Squires, Planner; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The A/Chair called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by M. Walker and Seconded by C. Harper: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on July 7, 2021, be adopted.”

CARRIED

MOVED by C. Harper and Seconded by J. Lee: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on July 21, 2021, be adopted.”

CARRIED

1572 Derby Road

Application by Cory and Cheryl Leahy

This is an application to construct a two-storey garden suite on a large lot. The applicant is seeking a variance to allow the garden suite, which has a height greater than 4.2 m, to be sited 1.5 m from the interior property line, a minimum of 3.0 m is required.

Legal Description: Lot 3, Section 37, Victoria District, Plan 10294

Planning File: DPR00828
Planner: Megan Squires, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The proposed building height is 6.34 m.
- There is a variance request for engineering servicing. The property does not have a stormwater connection. A variance to our Subdivision Bylaw would be required to allow for an alternative solution. This variance is being co-managed between the Planning and Engineering Departments.

- Planning is seeking comments on the building and site design, specifically the dormer window and second-story balcony on the west elevation and the privacy impacts on neighbouring property.

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

- As this is a two-storey structure, as per the Zoning Bylaw, a 3.0 m interior side setback is required; a variance of 1.5 m is being requested.

Comments from applicant /owner:

Cory Leahy, owner; presented to the Panel:

- This site is one of the larger lots on Derby Road and backs onto the Doncaster Elementary School field and a Garry Oak grove.
- Since purchasing the home, the intention has been to derive rental income in some form.
- With the adoption of garden suites as a planning solution to affordable housing, this property offers an ideal opportunity for an addition with minimal visual intrusion to the neighbours and existing dwelling.
- There are four mature trees in the back yard, two flowering cherry trees, a Garry Oak and the neighbour's Douglas Fir, the latter two being protected species.
- These trees provide a natural privacy screen to the northwest corner of the lot.
- The Saanich Parks' representative and the project Arborist agreed that the northwest corner is the ideal location based on the existing trees and green space.
- There is a natural gradual slope from front and back and will naturally diminish the height. The neighbours are higher on their lots, so there are minimal impacts to neighbours.
- A two-storey garden suite minimizes the footprint and allows the design character to be compatible with the existing residence.
- The small dormers and skylights on the roof allow for natural light and privacy.
- The roofline runs down to a low eave on the east and west sides, which face the neighbours; this gives the appearance of a 1.5-storey structure. The orientation of the roofline minimizes shadow to either side.
- The master bedroom has skylights, and a dormer straddles two closets to minimize privacy impacts on the neighbour.
- The main floor is open concept with a powder room on this level. Double patio doors from the dining room lead out onto a large deck that wraps around the east side.
- The two bedrooms, office, laundry facilities and full bathroom are upstairs. The master bedroom has a walk-out balcony and access to the bathroom through a pocket door. Operable awning, casement and slider windows provide optimal cross ventilation.
- The existing driveway will be the garden suite's dedicated parking space and include a Level 2 EV charger. A new permeable driveway will be created along the east side of the existing resident for the owner's exclusive use.
- The hedge along the west side of the driveway acts as a privacy screen. A one-metre wide path leads past the primary residence, down the back yard, through the trees, onto the covered patio entryway of the garden suite.
- Along the illuminated pathway is an enclosed, lockable bicycle storage unit. On the north side, closest to the kitchen, is a covered waste receptacle enclosure.
- The primary goal of the landscaping plan is to afford privacy by retaining all trees on site. The garden suite is sited purposely to minimize disturbances to the critical root zones.
- A new five-foot high cedar fence with overhead trellis will be built along the north and west sides of the garden suite.
- New sod will surround the house, and native plant species are interspersed throughout the rockery which surrounds the deck.

- The garden suite outdoor amenity space includes a large open grassy area with a new dogwood tree and a sizeable deck with a rockery below. All of the amenity spaces are naturally screened by trees and/or fences.
- A heat pump system will provide low-cost, sustainable temperature control. High-efficiency windows are placed strategically to allow an abundance of natural light into the bedrooms and living spaces.
- An engineer has designed a stormwater management alternative that includes an underground cistern that will recapture the roof water for irrigation purposes. Once full, the cistern will then feed into the underground stormwater chambers, allowing the roof run-off to seep back into the ground, helping to sustain the surrounding mature trees.
- The materiality for the suite are painted HardiePlank and stained cedar shingles.
- The siting variance will allow the preservation of the trees.
- The second variance is for relief from the municipal storm drain requirement. This site is in the centre of a 106 m long section of Derby Road that contains no storm main. Having to connect to the municipal storm drain would be cost-prohibitive and disruptive to the neighbourhood.

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

- With just one step up to the porch, implementing a ramp would not be difficult if needed.

Comments from the Panel:

- It is appreciated that the neighbours and the Arborist are supportive of the siting of the garden suite.
- The location of the waste receptacles is impractical and not very user-friendly. Consideration should be given to moving the structure further up, closer to the front of the lot near the bicycle storage.
- Instead of the rockery, consideration could be given to putting landscaping dollars into more prominent landscaping elements that create a sense of space.
- The deck is close to the Garry Oak tree; consideration could be given to reducing the size of the deck or moving it further north.
- To create more privacy for the primary residence, consideration could be given to moving the walkway a little bit west.
- There is an opportunity to have a larger window in the kitchen.
- Putting a lattice up to create a screen on the balcony will mitigate privacy concerns while still allowing light to come through.

MOVED by M. Walker and Seconded by C. Harper: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a two-storey garden suite at 1572 Derby Road be approved subject to consideration of:

- **A landscaping design, in particular, reconsideration of the deck and rockery at the Gary Oak;**
- **Reconsideration of the waste receptacles location;**
- **Privacy screening for the second-floor balcony to the west elevation.”**

CARRIED

937 Lodge Avenue

Application by Backyard Bungalows Inc. (Nick Kardum)

This is an application to construct a two-storey garden suite on a large lot. No variances are requested.

Legal Description: Lot 25, Section 33, Victoria, District, Plan 1253A

Planning File: DPR00899

Planner: Megan Squires, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- This property is 1058 m², the lower end of the large lot category. The lot size supports a garden suite with a maximum building height of 6.5 m for a sloped roof and a maximum gross floor area of 93 m².
- Planning has completed its initial review and is seeking comments on potential impacts to the privacy of neighbouring properties due to the windows on the second storey, landscaping to promote privacy for tenants as well as adjacent neighbours, and the proposed location of the one-metre pathway on the east property line.

Comments from applicant /owner:

Nick Kardum, Backyard Bungalows Inc, on behalf of the owners; presented to the Panel:

- All items, such as suite size, lot coverage, etc., comply with Saanich's requirements.
- Many measures have been planned to minimize the impact on neighbour's privacy and shading: increased setbacks, reduced height, thoughtful window sizes and orientation, fencing and vegetation/landscaping.
- Existing trees will be retained.
- No parking spaces will be added, and impervious surfacing has been minimized by using gravel for the pathway.
- The illuminated pathway to the garden suite ranges in width from 1 m to 1.5 m to retain a tree.
- The siting of the suite responds to the site's natural topography. Significant excavation is not required as this is slab-on-grade.
- The suite fits well with the neighbourhood using Hardieboard lap siding, shingles, gable roof with dormer, and asphalt shingles to reinforce the residential character.
- Most windows are oriented toward the interior of the yard to mitigate privacy concerns.
- The low light LED illumination along the pathway is kept to a minimum sufficient for pedestrian safety and visibility, with recessed pot lights in the suite's soffits limiting light spilling into adjacent properties.
- The dormer is integrated into the main roof and does not exceed 40% of the width of the upper storey.
- The grade change with the retaining wall, greenhouse, palm trees and other vegetation define the separation between the garden suite and primary residence.
- Both side yards, along with the front and rear yards, are available as outdoor amenity spaces.
- The vegetation behind the garden suite will balance light and privacy.

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

- The beds along the south wall will be approximately two feet long and contain tall grasses.

- Regarding the letdown, the drawings could be inaccurate as the letdown is wide enough to access both driveways.
- It was originally planned to have outdoor amenity space near the living room but ultimately decided to have it at the front of the suite.
- All trees and plants are existing; it is quite overgrown and will be pruned to fit. The hedges are on the neighbouring property.
- A lot of consideration was given to the waste receptacle location; the underdeck space is not utilized.
- The pathway next to the primary residence is five feet wide.

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

- The Zoning regulations determine the width of the pathway, and the design guidelines speak to the materiality and accessibility; as long as the pathway is clear and one metre wide, regulations are met.
- Engineering did not comment on the driveway letdown. Planning will discuss the letdown with Engineering.

Comments from the Panel:

- The pathway looks pretty long, and accessibility may be an issue if crushed rock is the material used.
- The area to the left of the “bed” in the master bedroom would be an ideal spot for a walk-in closet, leaving enough room on the right-hand side for a bathroom. It is a bit of a lost opportunity.
- The materiality is welcoming.
- There is a driveway letdown from the sidewalk to Lodge Avenue for the proposed garden suite driveway; there is no letdown for the proposed tandem parking spot for the primary residence.
- The garden suite’s bicycle storage and waste receptacles should be independent of the primary residence.
- Consideration could be given to a small patio or direct access to the exterior space off of the living room before you enter the bathroom on the main floor.
- This is an intense site. The pathway between the house and property line is a bit harsh; plantings would soften the edges.
- A hard surface for the pathway would increase accessibility.
- Consideration could be given to increasing the access outside of the proposed deck to create an outdoor space. There is a great opportunity in the front area and then have a garden as well.
- It is a bit odd that the garden suite parking is situated in front of the primary residence. Passage to the garden suite will have to be very obvious for visitors as it is hidden behind conifers.
- Unfortunately, a landscape plan has not been submitted, only a landscape inventory.
- It is understood that the intention is that the yard space below the retaining wall is for the use of the garden suite; however, that should be clarified.
- This unit deserves some landscaping, not just pruning.
- Expansion of patio space at the front door is needed. Consideration could be given to landscaping around the front entry to soften its appearance.
- Invasive species need to be removed.
- The pathway, although acceptable for permeability, is not great for accessibility.
- An arborist review should be considered as the neighbour’s Oaktree and its root zone are in close proximity and may be impacted when excavating for the foundation.

MOVED by M. Walker and Seconded by I. Gallant: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a two-storey garden suite at 937 Lodge Avenue be approved subject to consideration of:

- **Developing a landscape plan;**
- **Provision of privacy screening from the second story windows;**
- **Clarity of address and access to the garden suite;**
- **Inclusion of a hardscape amenity area;**
- **Submission of an Arborist report regarding the landscape and planting plans and existing conditions.”**

CARRIED
With G. Gillespie OPPOSED

The meeting adjourned at 5:08 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY