

MINUTES
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via MS Teams
October 6, 2021, at 3:02 pm

Chair: Keith Davidoff

Present: Illarion Gallant, Greg Gillespie, Jacy Lee, Erica Sangster, Nicholas Standeven, Megan Walker, and Janine Wigmore

Regrets:

Staff: Chuck Bell, Planner, Current Planning; Pam Hartling, Senior Planner, Community Planning; Megan Squires, Planner; Community Planning and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

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

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by J. Lee: “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on August 18, 2021, be adopted.”

CARRIED

520 Normandy Road

Application by Aryze Developments (Luke Mari)

This is a rezoning and development permit application to construct a four-storey, 68-unit apartment building. Variances are requested for parking, setbacks, building height and building width.

Legal Description: Lot 8, Section 108, Lake District, Plan 5710 Except Part in Plan 2431 RW

Planning File: DPR00766; REZ00647

Planner: Chuck Bell, Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The ADP saw the previous iteration in October 2020 as a six-storey rental building.
- The revised proposal is a 68-unit, four-storey rental building consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP) and does not require an OCP Bylaw Amendment.
- Although the applicant requested a site-specific zone, the Planning Department determined that the RA-10 (Apartment) Zone will accommodate this project, and parking variances are required in either instance. The other variances are based on the RA-10 zoning.
- The following variances are identified:

- A variance of 68 spaces is required for total parking (102 spaces required, 34 spaces proposed).
- A variance of 17 spaces is required for visitor parking (21 spaces required, four spaces proposed).
- A variance of one space for accessible parking (two spaces required, one space proposed).
- A variance of 1.8 m is required on the front yard (Normandy Road) for building setbacks to lot lines abutting a street (5.0 m required, 3.2 m proposed).
- A variance of 2.8 m is required on the exterior side yard (Elk Lake Drive) for building setbacks to lot lines abutting a street (5.0 m required, 2.2 m proposed).
- A variance of 2.0 m is required for building height (15.0 m maximum allowed, 17.0 m proposed).
- A variance of 10.0 m is required for horizontal width (55.0 m maximum allowed, 65.0 m proposed), although it is acknowledged that the most extended individual section length is only 41.7 m.

E. Sangster declared pursuant to Division 6, Section 100(1)(c) of the Community Charter that she is not entitled to participate in the discussion of the 520 Normandy Application as she is a member of the Application Team. E. Sangster left her role as Panelist and joined her Application Team at 3:06 p.m.

Comments from applicant /owner:

Carly Abrahams, Development Manager and Olivia Wheeler, Development Coordinator, Aryze Development; Erica Sangster, Principal Architect and Matthew Jarvis, Architect, D’Ambrosio architecture + urbanism; Bianca Bodley, Owner and Principle Designer, Biophilia design collective; presented to the Panel:

- This project is a purpose-built rental close to the Royal Oak major centre, has the main frontage on Elk Lake Drive, a major transit route and is surrounded by low-rise multi-family buildings, commercial and institutional projects.
- This building acts as an endcap to the single-family houses of a more quiet residential road.
- The applicant has been mindful that the project has a positive interface with Elk Lake Drive and is sensitive to the environment of Normandy Creek.
- The project goes beyond current standards with building to Step 4 Building Code requirements using passive house strategies, compact building form and reduced window area.
- The design principles include sustainable design and construction, compact infill, thoughtful configuration, and the ability for a car-lite lifestyle.
- The building is four storeys plus a partly underground parkade. It contains 68 homes, comprised of 22 bachelor units, 28 one-bedroom units and 18 two-bedroom units.
- A full suite of transportation strategies is offered including bike storage and charging, once car-share vehicle and Modo memberships for residents. There are 34 parking stalls, 63 long-term bike parking stalls, five cargo bike stalls and a bike repair station.
- The corner of the lot is the focal point and location of the main entrance. Individual entrances connect to the sidewalk for the ground-oriented units.
- Access to the underground parking has been relocated to Normandy Road.
- The north end of the site picks up the orientation of the single-family homes, reduces visible massing and allows the project to conform more closely with the neighbourhood.

- Building shape, position and landscaping help to mitigate the impact on the neighbourhood.
- Visual buffering along street frontages assist with keeping the neighbourhood character.
- An environmental biologist was consulted to ensure a thoughtful approach to this environmentally sensitive site.
- The site was divided into four specific planting zones: riparian/SPEA, stormwater pond, forest and meadow.
- The north SPEA and stormwater are overrun by invasive species, which will be removed. On the south border of the SPEA, fencing will be installed. Both native and ornamental plantings will be planted in the stormwater retention pond to help support the adjacent SPEA.
- On the south and east entries, meadow plantings will create a welcoming and inviting south façade. The eastern private entrances will have evergreens with a low-maintenance lush buffer.
- On the municipal boulevard, there is low cell volume; soil cells may be needed under the sidewalk. Forty-four total new trees are required, 56 will be provided.
- The elevation at the private entrances, picket fences and lush plantings at the ground-level walk-ups create a sense of privacy.
- The Willows will remain and be fenced off. Ten trees will be removed. Five municipal trees will need removal because of the sidewalk, three bylaw-protected trees require significant pruning, and mitigation strategies will retain one bylaw-protected tree.
- This design has a more three-dimensional façade with large balconies. The critical aspect is the materiality as it is warm, durable and residential in feel.
- The south elevation highlights the corner entry and the wrap-around balconies. There is a rhythm of repeating pilasters; overall height is not what a bystander sees. The pilasters create depth.
- Plantings and shrubs screen the underground parking. There are four visitor spaces and four accessible spaces.
- The first level contains the corner lobby entry, bike room, at-grade patio units, and windows at both ends of the corridors.
- Studio units are approximately 400 ft², one-bedroom units are 600 ft², and two-bedroom units are 820 ft².
- Levels two to four have the same unit mix.
- The roof has one mechanical penthouse, which accommodates the hot water supply.

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

- The connection from the north end of the parkade to the SPEA is not intended to be publicly accessible; it is for maintenance purposes.
- The exterior parkade walls will feature architectural concrete screened by landscaping.
- Wood or wood-toned sloped soffit is proposed for the canopy over the parkade entry.
- This is a car-lite building. Parking will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Many will take advantage of transit and other modes of transportation.
- Studio units are not designed for wheelchair accessibility. One-bedroom and larger units are designed to be adaptable.
- Each parking spot will have a conduit for the future installation of Level 2 charging capacity. There will be two charging stations on site.
- The wedge on the western side of the stairwell will have native ferns and shade tolerant plants planted. On the right hand side and the boulevard will be lawn or whatever Saanich requests.

Comments from the Panel:

- There are many commendable areas where natural light is considered.

- Consideration could be given to provide natural light to the parkade and invest in a heavily textured concrete finish to add to the sculptural quality.
- This design has great unit planning for these compact, liveable homes.
- None of the units are suitable for people in wheelchairs.
- A 15-minute walk to shopping amenities is not practical for a senior citizen or someone with a small child. Parking is a concern.
- Appreciate the addition of the recessed balconies, patio entrances, the landscape buffer for the houses to the west, and the light and natural wood-toned materiality.
- Consideration could be given to setting back the landscape from the building in a more formal way, perhaps with a border of river-rock.
- In between the doors on the north side is too tight of an area for the Weeping Cyprus.
- The rain garden planting looks pretty sparse; consideration should be given to using larger species and larger shrubs. Use some larger scaled, more dominant trees, a more dominant palette and let it flow into the SPEA.
- The area between the two walkways at the front entry needs a stronger design to make it more cohesive.
- The orientation of the building keeps most of the shadowing onsite.
- The corner focal point is welcoming; the difference in materiality anchors the building
- This is 100% rental, clear focus on sustainability – building to Step Code 4, this is an ideal location for this type of housing.
- Appreciate the smaller footprint and the generous space for bikes.
- Consideration could be given to opening up the northwest corner of the parkade to increase light.
- Consideration will need to be given to the winter irrigation of the overhanging planters.
- Ground-level planting is sparse on the western edge.

MOVED by N. Standeven and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That it be recommended that the design to construct a four-storey, 68-unit apartment building at 520 Normandy Road be approved subject to consideration of landscaping on the west side.”

**CARRIED
With J. Lee OPPOSED**

E. Sangster, in her capacity as ADP member, returns to the meeting at 4:25 p.m.

Garden Suite Review

Discussion between Planning Staff and ADP regarding ADP’s role in the Garden Suite review process to date.

Comments from the Planner:

- When the Garden Suite Program was approved, we agreed to review the process at the one-year and two-year marks.
- The Planning Department is reaching out to all departments that play a role in the garden suite applications to gather feedback, challenges and recommended changes.
- This year, 65 applications have been received, 25 have been approved, 19 with variances.
- The Planners coach applicants to be receptive to feedback; it is free advice. The motion provides the feedback that needs to be addressed. After ADP, the applicant submits

revised plans. If the applicant has decided not to address an issue they an explanation is needed.

- The ADP input has been productive.
- There has been a full spectrum of applications, from very good to really utilitarian.
- Overall, Planning Staff has been happy with the calibre and detail of the comments coming from ADP. The strength of the motion is the salient piece.

Comments from the Panel:

- This garden suite program is a great initiative.
- Some applications are incomplete with hand-drawn or sketched-out landscape plans that are not consistent with the architectural plans.
- The same questions have to be asked to each applicant, where is the bike parking? Where are the waste receptacles? Where is the EV charging?
- Once the first wave of these projects is on the ground, it will be interesting to see if they meet the need.
- The landscape plans tend to be the weakest point of the application. Hiring a landscape architect is expensive, and people tend to think that landscaping is insignificant.
- The Garden Suite Design Guide could include a sample landscape plan that provides all of the elements required for a complete landscape plan.
- Some applications are so incomplete or inadequate it is difficult to provide productive feedback.
- There is a question as to whether this is the proper use of resources.
- To gather neighbourhood and primary residence context, consideration could be given to requiring photos as part of the application.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY