

DISTRICT OF SAANICH
MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL
Via MS Teams
Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

Chair: Greg Gillespie
Members: Stephen Deglow; Brad Forth; Andy Guiry; Jacy Lee; C-J Rupp; Will Kryzmowski, Kimberly Simpson
Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior; Planner; Alison Whyte, Planning Technician; Kirsten Brazier, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by A. Guiry and Seconded by S. Deglow “That the Minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting dated August 2, 2023, be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

4503 BLENKINSOP ROAD

Application by Backyard Bungalows.

This application is to construct a garden suite on a large lot.

Legal Description: Lot 17, Section 7, Lake District Plan 15702
Planning File: DPR01028
Planning Staff: Sarah de Medeiros, Senior Planning Technician

Comments from the Planner:

- The property is in the Sewer Service Area and is zoned RS-18.
- Lot area is 2920.6 m² which allows for a large garden suite.
- The applicant has applied for variances for front setbacks and lot coverage.
- Planning is seeking comments on the site design and layout, landscaping and building design (massing).

Comments from the applicant:

- The project has a 4 m setback which is greater than the minimum required.
- The setbacks align with the rest of the neighbourhood.
- The lot has three street frontages.
- The garden suite would have Hardie Board siding.
- Windows facing the adjacent property promote privacy and reduce overlook.
- Lighting for the garden suite compliments the building and the landscape.
- Entrances are orientated towards Blenkinsop Road and the existing house.
- The closest neighbour to the garden suite would be the neighbour to the east.
- Existing vegetation and trees provide separation from the main house and the neighbouring property.
- A few fruit trees would need to be removed to accommodate the garden suite.
- Electric Vehicle car charging would be installed as well as secured and covered bike parking.

SUMMARY

In response to questions from the panel, the applicant stated:

- The top floor of the building would be a storage attic. The stairs on the outside will be used to access this space.
- Access to the upper floor would be by a wide stairwell on the facing of the building.
- The stairway access to the crawlspace is noted as being 8 feet across. This was included to allow for access of large items for the space.
- The square footage of the upper floor is not occupiable.
- There is currently not enough room for a full height access to the upper floor.
- Additional hedge plantings were not considered at this time as privacy for the garden suite is not an issue.
- The closest neighbour does not feel a need for a fence or additional landscaping to be added at this time.
- The larger trees that would be removed to accommodate the driveway would be replaced elsewhere on site. The orchard trees being removed are in poor health.
- The arborist will make a recommendation as to which species of trees would be planted on the site.

Comments from the Panel:

- The orientation of the building on the site works and the general form is supportable.
- Massing fits well in the neighbourhood and the garden suite would be placed on underutilized land.
- The front entrance seems to be a bit confused.
- The emphasis on the front door and access from Pearce Crescent could be considered.
- Having two non-occupiable spaces in the design seems to be awkward. A second story would have been preferred.
- The crawl space and upper floor is a clever way to maximize storage.
- Additional height on the second floor and a full height access is suggested.
- The front façade presents as busy with the exterior staircases.
- Further enhancement of the landscaping design was suggested. A more fulsome landscape plan would have been appreciated.
- A tree table that denotes what trees are being added and removed would be an asset to the application.
- The site is well suited to accommodate the additional site coverage.
- The glazing works well for the proposed building.

MOVED by S. Deglow and Seconded by A. Guiry: “That the application to construct a garden suite at 4503 Blenkinsop Road be approved subject to the consideration of:

- **providing a more detailed landscape plan; and**
- **addressing the sense of entry to the garden suite.”**

CARRIED

760 TOLMIE AVENUE

Application by Townline.

This application is to construct a three tower 21 to 24 story mixed use residential/commercial development with 555 residential units.

Legal Description: Lot A, Section 7, Victoria District Plan 12595
Planning File: DPR01020
Planning Staff: Gina Lyons, Senior Planner

Comments from the Planner:

- The submission is a rezoning and development permit application to construct a 3-tower mixed use development with 555 rental units.
- A large commercial grocery store is the anchor tenant for the ground floor of the development.
- Two of the towers would be located on Tolmie Avenue and are proposed to be 21 stories in height.
- The third tower would be located on Oak Street and Rodrick Street and is proposed to be 24 stories.
- The site is located in the Saanich Core Local Area Plan and is identified for commercial/industrial use. The site is within the policy area of the Uptown Douglas Plan (UDP).
- UDP designates this area available for high rise, mixed-use or residential/commercial buildings with a base height of 12 stories to a maximum height of 18 stories.
- The UDP contains a policy to consider heights up to 24 stories. This site is outside of the area, but the policy states that other sites may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- Developments must demonstrate how increased building height contributes to onsite open space and public realm improvements. The development must demonstrate good urban design specific to tall buildings.
- The UDP contains policy to create a new lane that will run parallel to Douglas Street, bisecting the block between Douglas Street and Oak Street.
- Audley Crossing is intended to be a shared lane with pedestrian priorities. The lane is intended to be utilized for loading for adjacent commercial as well as supporting pedestrian, cycle and local vehicle use.
- The UDP identifies Oak Street as being the central high street for the district. Oak Street is to be designed as a pedestrian promenade which would be framed by active and engaging mixed-use development. The policy supports changes to Oak Street which would increase the animation and pedestrian orientation, including the addition of parks, plazas and active uses. Blank walls and larger building faces fronting the street are discouraged.
- One of the main objectives of the UDP is to frame streets with pedestrian orientated building design.

Planning is seeking comments from the panel on:

- The successfulness of the design of Audley Crossing while acknowledging the practical requirements of large-scale commercial use.
- The development's presentation to Oak Street and its adherence to the objectives of the UDP for Oak Street to be a pedestrian oriented high street bordered by active commercial uses.
- The developments interface with the pedestrian realm along Tolmie Avenue.
- The proposed design of the plaza, public realm improvements and urban design as it relates to tall buildings; and
- The general form and character and site planning and landscape design of the development.

Comments from the applicant:

- This building application proposes a 100,000 square foot grocery store on the ground floor, with 555 of purpose-built rental housing.
- The Loblaw company purchased this site a number of years ago, and plan to build a Real Canadian Superstore at this location.
- The towers are prescribed to their current locations due to the need to build them on the bedrock that is on site.
- The site is comprised of 147,000 square feet of which 100,000 would be a grocery store.
- There are to be seven ground-oriented townhomes.
- Tower Two and Three are to be 21 stories, and Tower One is to be 24 stories which would feature a residential amenity to be shared by all residents.
- This site has sloping conditions which allows for at-grade commercial at Oak Street and for Audley Crossing as loading for the commercial stores. Garbage collection will be accessed off of Audley Crossing.
- The project falls within the Douglas-Oak Hub neighbourhood and follows the guidelines of the Official Community Plan. This project does anticipate mixed used redevelopment of the Mayfair Mall site.
- Plazas and parkettes have been setback at each corner of the site to provide access to both the private and public realms.
- Ground orientated townhomes and parkettes have been included at the corner of Roderick Street and Audley Crossing.
- The project is compliant with the Step Two requirements of the BC Energy Code.
- Waste heat recovery from commercial refrigeration equipment will be captured to reduce the overall load. The stormwater management strategy incorporates landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff.
- A new bike lane will be provided along Tomie Avenue. On street parking will be located along Roderick Street.
- Parkade access will be off Tolmie Avenue and Roderick Street.
- Two levels of residential parking will be provided with access via a dedicated ramp. Parking access to the lower level also includes retail parking.
- One hundred residential storage lockers are included at the parking levels.
- Accessible stalls will be provided as required.
- A residential freight elevator will be included to provide access to the bike rooms, and extra wide sidewalk beside the ramp allows for residents to walk their bikes down to the bike room.
- A residential bike hub is located off the main entrance. 30 bike stalls for commercial access are located off Tolmie, along with the access to commercial parking.
- A bowling alley amenity and amenity deck will be for the exclusive use of residents.
- Each tower will have an amenity room with direct access to the amenity deck.
- Oak Street will have an active pedestrian orientated frontage.
- Each tower will have unique colours (bronze, nickel and champagne).
- The mezzanine within the grocery store allows for mechanical rooms to vent exhaust to Audley Crossing.
- Units comply with the adaptable housing schedule supplied by Saanich.
- Strong and well programmed social spaces have been designed on the roof deck. The outdoor space includes an outdoor kitchen. Pollinator gardens, an outdoor theatre and sports components.

SUMMARY**In response to questions from the panel, the applicant stated;**

- The nature of the amenity spaces could be given further consideration.
- The bowling alley is meant to be an amenity for the residents of the towers. All commercial floor area is being utilized by Superstore and the other commercial units provided.
- The public plaza addresses grade challenges of the corner at Oak Street.
- 17% of the land on the site is designed as open space.
- The public plaza is part of the Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) provided by Townline at the request of Saanich. The plaza provides emergency vehicle access and bicycle access. A public art component will be included.
- Two retail units will be located on the Oak Street Plaza. The existing conditions of the street present challenges to operate a greater number of commercial spaces.
- The Superstore has sizing requirements to operate efficiently as a superstore.
- A multi-functional cultural node will be showcased alongside the commercial area which helps to break up the commercial units facing the street.
- The bike hub off the mezzanine space allows for residents to work on their bikes and provides E-bike charging.
- Bike storage spaces are located on the two residential parking levels. The north access enters directly at grade to the larger bike storage locker area. The southwest towers can also serve as access to the bike lane that will be connected to the Galloping Goose trail.
- Both levels of residential bike parking can be accessed via the freight elevators. 20% of the bike storage can be accessed off the plaza level.
- Audley Crossing provides landscaping at the ground level with fully protected pedestrian access. The fully internalized loading bay is a benefit to the project. This crossing will be one way travel from north to south.
- The hierarchy of the towers are driven by their height as it relates to Audley Crossing and Oak Street.
- The entries are treated as cubes to access the towers and the commercial spaces.
- The tower design has intentionally been presented as subdued to better suit the location of the project in Saanich.
- All units will be 100% adaptable as per the Saanich bylaw. Townline is willing to adapt units on an as needed basis to meet the needs of individual renters.
- Audley Crossing will be fully lit throughout. It has been designed to promote safe and comfortable access at all hours.
- This project will be operated under the Townline Management umbrella and property management staff have noted that the design allows for proper maintenance of the elevated private amenity deck.
- Part of the project's CAC will be to contribute to the Saanich Parks Reserve Fund and the Saanich Affordable Housing Fund.
- Stormwater management has been addressed through the landscaping and tanks for stormwater retention.
- The current plans do not include rain gardens on the boulevard areas. The grade change on the site presents challenges in rainwater retention in these areas.
- The feature tower at Oak and Roderick is the landmark tower of the project. It has been designed to be a clean and elegant look.

In response to questions from the panel, staff stated;

- Private amenities are encouraged within high density multi-family developments.
- The entirety of Audley Crossing is taken from the lands of the project, and staff are of the opinion that it meets the intent of both public and private spaces.
- The pedestrian plaza on the northwest corner at Oak Street was requested for this project.

Comments from the Panel:

- The private space is well thought out. A public amenity would be appreciated.
- The private amenity space is well designed and is appreciated.
- The contribution to the housing stock is appreciated.
- The project responds well to the constraints of the site and the surrounding building and meets the needs of rental units in the city.
- The maximization of the number of amenities is appreciated.
- The design has responded to many of the challenges around bike access with innovation.
- The layout of the units is practical with an appropriate amount of in suite storage.
- A few more commercial store fronts would be a good addition to the project.
- The project falls short on public realm access to the site. Tolmie Avenue and Oak Street need to be activated on the street frontage. Oak Street needs to be activated as a pedestrian realm. The art wall is not an activation of this area.
- The Oak Street Plaza would benefit from the inclusion of green spaces.
- Better articulation of the tower forms would be appreciated. The massing could be clearer.
- The creation of a private amenity space creates the feeling of a gated community. Part of this could be connected to the public realm.
- The way the towers meet the ground at entry could be given further consideration. Changing the materiality of the tower entrances would further define them as an entry to the private areas.
- The design of the towers is very vertical. The corner treatments are somewhat challenging.
- The interior courtyard is a fantastic design. The forms and content of the landscaping are of a high quality.
- The lower amenity areas could incorporate additional greenspace that would echo the elevated design of the private deck area.
- The parkettes could be improved upon with additional landscaping and greenery.
- Boulevard treatments could include more stormwater elements.
- The attention paid to amenities on site for the residents is welcomed.
- The dedicated loading zones are appreciated.
- The corner treatments of the project are somewhat challenging. The weakest corner is at Audley at Tolmie. Further activation of this area and additional landscaping would be appreciated.
- Additional greening at the ground level would be supported to break up the utilitarian feel of these areas.
- The bike hub with access to the bike parking area is a welcome addition to the project.
- The inclusion of the townhomes is a nice addition to the mix of housing units.
- The variety of amenity spaces throughout the project is a nice addition.
- The integration of a mass timber component is a clever component of the project.
- The project does meet the needs of rental units in the city.
- The design of the towers are currently not meeting the mark for setting precedent for the future of Saanich. Minor changes would make them a much stronger contribution.

MOVED by A. Guiry and Seconded by W. Kryzmowski; “That the application to construct a three tower, 21 to 24-storey mixed used residential/commercial development with 555 residential unit at 760 Tolmie Avenue be approved subject to further consideration of:

- **increasing the intensity of public green space;**
- **unique residential lobby expressions;**
- **increased activation of the building at the street level such as;**
 - **improving animation of the Superstore frontage; and**
 - **increasing points of entry for the Commercial Retail Units, where possible;**
- **increased retention of stormwater at the boulevards;**

- improved clarity of architectural expression of subforms within the tower; and,
- increasing the point of entries at Oak Street and Tolmie Avenue frontages.

CARRIED
with C.J. Rupp OPPOSED

The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

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CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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COMMITTEE SECRETARY