



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Minutes - Draft

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

APC Design Review Committee

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

2:30 PM

Esquimalt Council Chambers

Present: 6 - Chair Graeme Verhulst
Vice Chair Tara Todesco
Member Richard McGrew
Member Xeniya Vins
Member Chris Windjack
Member Shaun Smakal

Regrets: 1 - Member Derek Jenkins

Council Liaison: Ken Armour

Staff Present: Bill Brown, Director of Development Services
James Davison, Manager of Development Services
Jill Walker, Recording Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the Design Review Committee to order at 2:30PM and gave a Territorial Acknowledgment.

2. LATE ITEMS

There were no late items.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as circulated.

4. MINUTES

1) [23-596](#) Draft Minutes of DRC Meeting November 8, 2023

Moved by Member Todesco, seconded by Member Smakal: That the minutes of the November 8, 2023 meeting of the APC Design Review Committee be adopted as circulated. Carried Unanimously.

In 6 - Chair Graeme Verhulst, Vice Chair Tara Todesco,
Favour: Member Richard McGrew, Member Xeniya Vins,
Member Chris Windjack and Member Shaun Smakal

Absent: 1 - Member Derek Jenkins

5. STAFF REPORTS

1) [23-589](#) Development Permit and Development Variance Permit -

900 Carlton Terrace/900 Esquimalt Road - Staff Report
No. DRC-23-016

The Manager of Development Services introduced the application. The owner representative from 900 Carlton Holdings Inc, Jordan Milne, gave a presentation. Also in attendance representing the applicant was Richard Gill and Sarah MacNeill from GMC Projects, Morgan Lesov and Charles Kierulf from dHKarchitects, Bianca Bodley from Biophilia Landscape Architecture, and Tim Shah from Watt Consulting Group.

Commission Questions and Comments (staff and applicant response in *italics*)

* Several things to like about this project. Like to hear more about the public-accessible/private-owned space as one of the amenity contributions and the affordable housing. *Just over 36% of the site area - just over 10,000 s.f.-is currently privately-owned space that will become publicly accessible. This includes the setbacks to create the public realm along Esquimalt Rd, the plaza, the landscaped corner, and the dog park. We've earmarked 1M\$ toward affordable housing which we are still in discussions with staff about how that will be delivered. The one million dollars could go off-site to some other project. Or if it was on site, it would be earmark towards having a certain number of units being offered to the public at below market rates.*

* How did you come up with 26 storeys? *Through a massing exercise. Once we knew relatively how much density was needed on site to produce the development with all the offerings we've spoken about today, we determined the number of storeys.*

* Have you considered splitting into 2 equal towers? *Need to have certain floor plate size to make a tower viable (6800-7000 s.f). And what would end up happening is only having about 45 feet of building separation between 2 towers. Doesn't make it economical to pursue 2 towers due to the inefficiency of the smaller sized floor plate.. You either end up with the right floor plate and compromise livability or you end up with a floor plate with something unaffordable and we can't build.*

* Will this be the tallest building on Vancouver Island? *The Hudson 1 is the tallest at 25 storeys and there are other projects in process.*

* I see a number of street trees to be provided. Several are noted as on site replacement trees. *Replacement trees can be planted on or off site.*

* Do you intend to mound the trees on the roof deck? *No, will be elevated planters and will not be counted toward the site trees.*

* The soil volumes are enough? *Will vary depending on tree selection. We have some small and medium species. We've worked with both structural*

and what is required for the trees for them to thrive and have picked this specific volume for the planters.

** Is the roof deck intended to be for the condo owners' and renter's use?*

Yes, all amenities on site are intended to be shared.

** The pocket park on the corner, intend to preserve the Garry oak and provide other landscape. Does this area have other use or just a landscape? The program is to provide occasional seating for people using the bike room and cafe. Just a pause point really with some seating on the edges.*

** What was the thinking behind placing the street trees where they are? Initially, our concept had six or seven trees on the frontage of a Esquimalt and we were asked by staff to bring those back onto private property, based on the building entrances, site lines going into the parkade and how the awning interacted with the trees. We were limited to a couple of pockets. Also there are underground utilities we got close to.*

** Wondering if you had thought at all about a shared amenity for food production and food security that maybe doesn't take the form of individual raised planters? Or if you would look into any other typologies knowing that, there are 272 units and only providing 15 Planters. In our experience, a low percentage want a garden plot. Depending upon your location and people's desires can change over time, but we wanted to provide plots that are very large so they could be divided effectively into two to create 30. There's people who will get into it and then fall out of it. What we would be having ongoing monitoring and plots would have to be a first come first or sign up and then if you're actually not maintaining it or actually utilizing it, you'd be given a notification and you basically have 30 days in order to be able to respond to us and let us know that your intention is to use it.*

** Dog Park - shows it's gated but publicly accessible? Yes, gated for the protection of people's pets.. So again, when we talk about bonus density, this is 3,000 square feet of land that the municipality does not have to buy. It is 3,000 square feet of land for a dog park that the Municipality does not have to build or maintain.*

**How are using carbon capture concrete? Carbon capture technology would be embedded within 100% of the concrete as part of the mixture and is a technology that we didn't come up with but is being utilized in a variety of different projects.*

**Is the commercial space all there? There is 12,000 s.f. there today and we are proposing 8,000 s.f. There exists 3,000 s.f. with a second floor night club and we have no intentions to bring back that space or use. Losing some commercial space is a natural byproduct of trying to create that public realm.*

Discussion

- * much to like about this project; maintaining the commercial frontage and improvements are well done, the incorporation of the artwork, and the adaptability of the parking level.
- * lots of great things about this project but what is on the table is the substantial ask. Is this project exceptional enough to warrant the exceptional ask? This is the biggest question.
- * how much is really unique? We've seen a lot of these elements already. What warrants this as being the highest building in southern Vancouver Island? The only thing that looks unique to me is potentially the publicly accessible dog park.
- * The dog park is the size of a small backyard. It should have a play structure instead.
- * love the commercial space but this is already commercially-zoned.
- * has to be exceptional - Landmark building, it will not fit in for decades. Tower portion not landmark-worthy architecturally.
- * height not too terribly onerous but this will be a trail-blazing project just has to be exceptional in its form and design. This project would be perfectly fine downtown Vancouver, as exactly proposed.
- * Mural is an excellent element that wraps the building defining how the facade is expressed on all 4 sides.
- * Great mural element on the lower portion - cannot be incorporated into the tower somehow?
- * There is color and vibrancy.
- * Don't count off site trees for onsite replacements.
- * would like to see salvaged rockwork at the Garry oak, grading plan, amped up natural habitat space so not just a sedum blanket.
- * like the glass canopies. How do we protect this component because those canopies tie into the expression on facade and how that works.
- * I see lots of little wonderful things in here but I don't see enough information to protect them.
- * What does it say architecturally about Esquimalt? If it's a landmark, it should say something about Esquimalt.
- * What makes it special to Esquimalt? Because it's here. This could be anywhere. I think it is a landmark. You should say something about where it is.

Moved by Chair Verhulst, seconded by Member McGrew: That the Esquimalt Advisory Planning Commission Design Review Committee recommends to Council to approve the applications for Development Variance Permit and Development Permit to construct a 272-unit

mixed-use building with a floor area ratio (FAR) of 4.7 at 900 Carlton Terrace/900 Esquimalt Road with the following conditions:

a) The design be enhanced to be as extra ordinary as the ask. The committee has reservations that the 2 residential massing components are generic. The large ask for additional height and density requires the design to be a landmark that represents Esquimalt as it will become one of the tallest buildings on Vancouver Island.

b) That the committee would not be supportive if the design remains generic.

Carried.

In 4 - Chair Graeme Verhulst, Member Richard McGrew,
Favour: Member Chris Windjack and Member Shaun Smakal

Opposed: 2 - Vice Chair Tara Todesco and Member Xeniya Vins

Absent: 1 - Member Derek Jenkins

2) [23-539](#) Rezoning Application – 602, 608, 612 & 618 Nelson Street and 1319, 1331 & 1347 Sussex Street, Staff Report No. DRC-23-015

The Manager of Development Services left the meeting at approximately 4:10PM.

The Director of Development Services gave an overview of the application. Harsimer Rattan from Aquila Pacific gave a presentation.

Commission Questions and Comments (staff and applicant response in *italics*)

* What was previously approved in terms of FAR? *The previous building was 109 units with an FAR of 3.39. It was still 12 storey's but had an odd shape and set back due to the tree. The park size was 2400-2500 s.f.*

* The 5000 s.f. park - is that a public amenity? *Yes and will be maintained by us. It has a playground, a bench area underneath the tree and patio area.*

* The access to the parkade is off Sussex? *Yes, was a request of engineering staff. Previously we weren't able to get enough stalls and with the grade change there we were able to get underneath the building and have our service connections along Nelson Street.*

Discussion

* This has almost identical units per ha for density from previous proponent; slightly less denser at 4.3 instead of 4.7. Prefer a shorter and taller building with enhanced design for massing. 3 levels of parking is great.

* The park is more successful than others because it is prominent and

useable.

- * Took good advantage of the L-shaped site.
- * Have serious reservations about the floor plans as a lot of units have bedrooms without windows. Encourage applicant to address this when it returns for development permit. When the housing crisis is over, these units will be less desirable.
- * Discussion ensued about creating a bylaw to set parameters on acceptable height, usable bedrooms, and other things like garbage rooms, balcony loading calculations, etc in order to have some actual metrics from other projects or what is similarly being done in Vancouver.
- * Appreciate the park space and how the parking is done. When it comes back, it needs a considerable deep dive in terms of what is being provided for landscaping. Drainage, plant selection and layout, etc.
- * Nelson frontage you've got a full story of exposed wall that is just blank. It needs some resolution there.
- * Fine with rezoning; the reconfigured parkade, support the space and all that but going to be very hard on landscaping details when this returns.
- * Massing at the corner of Nelson and Sussex feels oppressive - maybe drop a storey in the center and go 13 storey's
- * Plantings in the public space could use some terracing.
- * The connecting piece between the towers needs some working out as it does feel very institutional to me.

Moved by Vice Chair Todesco, seconded by Member Vins: That the Esquimalt Design Review Committee recommends to Council that the rezoning application to authorize the proposed development of a 12-storey mixed-use building consistent with the architectural plans provided by Casola Koppe Architects and the landscape plan provided by Scatliff + Miller + Murray Inc., to be located at 602 Nelson Street, 608 Nelson Street, 612 Nelson Street, 618 Nelson Street, 1319 Sussex Street, 1331 Sussex Street, 1347 Sussex Street be forwarded to Council with a recommendation to approve for the reason that it provides essential and diverse housing and reflects similar density as the previously approved project, with the condition that the proponent consider alternate massing and design elements for a more neighbourly design and that this could include overall building height in one or both towers. Carried Unanimously.

In 6 - Chair Graeme Verhulst, Vice Chair Tara Todesco,
Favour: Member Richard McGrew, Member Xeniya Vins,
 Member Chris Windjack and Member Shaun Smakal

Absent: 1 - Member Derek Jenkins

3) [23-436](#) Development Permit and Development Variance Permit

Application – 1006 & 1008 Craigflower Road, Staff
Report No. DRC-23-014

Member Windjack recused himself as he had a conflict of interest.

The Director of Development Services provided some corrections to the staff report and introduced the application. David Fawley from DenCiti Development Corp gave a presentation, Steve Watt from Integra Architecture was in attendance, and Sean Loegreen from LADR Landscape Architects was on the phone to answer questions.

Commission Questions and Comments (staff and applicant response in *italics*)

* What exactly is the conflict with the street trees? *Our civil engineers received feedback from the township's engineering department that being a major intersection there is a host of underground utilities in that area. So with everything that we're being asked to do here, the sidewalk, boulevard landscaping, the bike lane and so forth - what we want to do is not possible or feasible based on feedback from our engineer.*

* Are you proposing anything on the firewall next door? *We are having ongoing conversations with our neighbours next door to see if we can paint it or really clean it up but the details are still being determined.*

* Concerned with sound in the amenity area - essentially have 3 walls and think some mediation is needed.

* Overall improvement to the corner and extra points for going through a DVP process to get these to market faster.

* Is the lawn area all artificial turf? *Yes, we are looking at about 200 square metres. We looked at the amount of shade and how problematic it would be to have real turf for upkeep and maintenance.*

* Concerned about 2000 s.f. of plastic - maybe a small section with some more creativity in that area.

* The planters are there as screening between the shared space and private decks and it's just as shady as it would be for the grass. *We debated grass versus turf quite vigorously. And in addition the maintenance we're also looking at the fact that our summers are hotter. It doesn't use water. The quality of the system to keep getting better than better.*

* Form and character is great. Concerns that amenity space is shaded out for most time of the year but support the artificial turf.

* Reconsider using Allan block for a more fulsome metal planter or a traditional raised concrete with more soil. The Allan block is climbable.

* Enough diversity of space, provides solid amenities and good lobby entrance.

* Would be nice to see more information of how the rainwater component works on the north side, the tank- how's that working in terms of capture and infiltration.

* How much does this site slope - it would be good to see that conveyed especially with relationship to the landscape architecture elements.

*Artificial turf adds zero ecological value. There is an opportunity to add ecological values and softening in this area. There are trees that tolerate shade and more creativity with this space would be good.

Moved by Vice Chair Todesco, seconded by Member Vins: That the Esquimalt Design Review Committee recommends to Council to approve the development permit and development variance permit consistent with the architectural plans provided by Integra Architecture Inc. and landscape plan provided by LADR Landscape Architects for the properties located at 1006 Craigflower Road and 1008 Craigflower Road for the reasons that it represents a quality design and fits well within the neighbourhood, with the conditions that consideration be given to redesign the inner courtyard to remove the artificial turf and replace with design elements that have more ecological value and climate resilience, and to consider planter material that allows for increased soil volume. Carried Unanimously.

In 6 - Chair Graeme Verhulst, Vice Chair Tara Todesco,
Favour: Member Richard McGrew, Member Xeniya Vins,
Member Chris Windjack and Member Shaun Smakal

Absent: 1 - Member Derek Jenkins

6. REVIEW OF PROJECTS

Director of Development Services Update

The Director of Development Services updated the committee that starting in January 2024 the videos from committee meetings will be available for viewing after the meetings. This is a change in practice from having the video happening live.

The Director then updated on the status of some applications considered by the committee.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Verhulst adjourned the meeting of the APC Design Review Committee at 5:50PM.

GRAEME VERHULST, CHAIR
APC DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

JILL WALKER
RECORDING SECRETARY

CERTIFIED CORRECT THIS DAY OF , 2023