



City of Richmond

Report to Council

To: Richmond City Council
From: Wayne Craig
Chair, Development Permit Panel
Date: July 10, 2024
File: DP 23-023854
Re: **Development Permit Panel Meeting Held on June 12, 2024**

Staff Recommendation

That the recommendation of the Panel to authorize the issuance of a Development Permit (DP 23-023854) for the property at 6071 Azure Road, be endorsed and the Permit so issued.

Wayne Craig
General Manager, Planning and Development
(604-276-4083)

Panel Report

The Development Permit Panel considered the following item at its meeting held on June 12, 2024.

DP 23-023854 – HNPA ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING INC. – 6071 AZURE ROAD
(June 12, 2024)

The Panel considered a Development Permit (DP) application to permit the construction of a low-rise to mid-rise residential development comprising 330 residential units, including 50 low-end-of-rental (LEMR) units, 110 moderate-income rental units and 170 market rental units at 6071 Azure Road on a site zoned “Low to Mid Rise Apartment (ZLR45) – Thompson”. Variances are included in the proposal: to reduce the minimum setback from Westminster Highway from 4.5 m to 4.35 m behind the bus stop and 4.14 m at the Westminster Highway and Azure Boulevard corner cut; and to reduce the minimum manoeuvring aisle width from 6.7 m to 6.1 m.

The applicant’s Architect, Jun Nan, of HNPA Architecture and Planning Inc., and the applicant’s Landscape Architect James Whelan, of Durante Kreuk Ltd., provided a brief visual presentation highlighting:

- The existing rental residential site with 50 townhouse units will be redeveloped into two four-storey apartment buildings and one six-storey apartment building with 330 units consisting of 50 low-end-of-market rental (LEMR) units, 110 moderate-income rental housing units and 170 market rental units.
- 46 per cent of the total number of units are family-friendly units or units having two to four bedrooms.
- The building height steps down to provide an appropriate interface with the adjacent single-detached homes.
- The buildings are arranged to surround two major courtyards on podium level with a single-level parking structure below.
- The outdoor amenity spaces provided on the podium level and at the fifth floor of the northeastern building are for the shared use of all residents in the proposed development.
- Indoor amenity spaces are provided in each building and most are located to open up visually or physically to the outdoor amenity spaces.
- The total area proposed for indoor and outdoor amenity spaces exceeds the City requirements.
- The use of different materials and colours visually breaks down the building massing and provides identity to each building.
- The podium level central private amenity courtyard is accessible from the street.
- All of the units meet Basic Universal Housing (BUH) requirements.
- The project meets the City’s energy efficiency and parking requirements.
- The western courtyard has been designed for active uses while the eastern courtyard has been designed for passive uses.
- Urban agriculture areas are located in the podium level outdoor amenity area and at the fifth floor level of the northeastern building which also provides opportunities for social gathering and events.
- All urban agriculture planters have been designed to be accessible for all users.

- Grade changes along the three road frontages are addressed through tiered retaining walls and significant planting.
- A grove of trees along the western edge of the site have been retained.
- Proposed planting includes native and non-native and deciduous and coniferous species.
- Open spaces for private on-site use are proposed at ground level.
- A variety of play equipment and elements are proposed for the children's play area to cater to different children's age groups.

In reply to queries from the Panel, staff noted that (i) there is a Servicing Agreement associated with the project including but not limited to the design and construction of road works including road widening on Westminster Highway and frontage improvements along the three road frontages of the site, traffic calming, utility connections and sanitary sewer upgrades, (ii) the proposed parking complies with the Zoning Bylaw requirements and a package of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures is proposed to reduce vehicle ownership in the proposed development, (iii) the subject site is impacted by aircraft noise and the project has been designed to meet the City's aircraft noise interior sound levels and thermal comfort requirements during summer, (iv) the project has been designed to achieve Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code with a low-carbon energy system and will connect to a City District Energy Utility (DEU) facility for domestic hot water heating when one is available in the area, (v) the rooftop urban agriculture is provided for the shared use of all residents in the proposed development, (vi) a significant number of trees along the west property line of the subject site will be retained and protected to provide a buffer to the single-family homes to west, and (vii) the proposed landscape plan includes the planting of 154 trees which exceeds the required 90 replacement trees.

In reply to queries from the Panel, staff confirmed that (i) the Transit Pass Program is part of the proposed TDM measures and is offered to all residents of the development and provides a two-zone monthly bus pass for a period of one year, (ii) the proposed 50 LEMR rental housing units are replacement units for the existing rental housing units on the subject site and existing tenants will be offered the option of renting a replacement LEMR unit in the proposed development, and (iii) the six rental housing units currently tenanted by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) clients will continue to be offered to VCH when construction of the LEMR units in the development is completed.

Discussion ensued regarding access to the podium level central courtyard and it was noted that (i) the central courtyard is only for private use of residents and is not publicly accessible, (ii) there are no gates or fencing proposed at the top or bottom of the ramp and stairs, and (iii) the elevation change from street level sidewalk to the podium level central courtyard marks the transition from the public realm to the semi-private realm.

Following discussion, the applicant was advised to install appropriate signage on the site to inform pedestrians that the podium level courtyard is a private space.

In reply to queries from the Panel, the applicant advised that (i) different types of lighting for different areas in the development are proposed, (ii) all planted areas in the development will be irrigated, (iii) the applicant will work with the arborist to ensure appropriate measures are taken during construction to ensure the protection and survival of existing trees along the west property

line, and (iv) the urban agriculture areas are provided with tool storage spaces as well as potting benches and compost storage areas.

Discussion ensued regarding the location of mechanical units and it was noted that (i) majority of mechanical units for the low-carbon energy system will be located in the parkade, (ii) a limited number of mechanical units for corridor ventilation are proposed to be located on building rooftops, and (iii) the provision of a heat pump for each unit and their proposed location in balconies are currently in the planning stage.

As a result of the discussion, the applicant was advised to take into consideration in their planning the noise that will be generated by the heat pumps and introduce appropriate noise mitigation measures.

In reply to a query from the Panel, staff confirmed a tree survival security is required to be provided by the applicant to ensure the survival of on-site trees identified for retention.

Discussion ensued regarding the proposed architectural and landscape treatment for ground-level exterior walls facing property lines and it was noted that (i) fencing and landscape screening are proposed for the loading area along Azure Boulevard, (ii) there is a high cast-in-place concrete wall adjacent to the bicycle parking area near the parkade entry on Azure Boulevard, (iii) flush landscaping is proposed at the bicycle parking area on Azure Boulevard near the northeast corner of the site, and (iii) there is a long concrete parkade wall along the west property line adjacent to the retained grove of trees.

Following discussion, the applicant was advised to (i) investigate opportunities to add more interest to the treatment of concrete walls along the west property line and adjacent to bicycle parking areas along Azure Boulevard, and (ii) introduce appropriate treatment to discourage tagging on smooth cast-in-place concrete walls.

In reply to the query from the Panel regarding the anticipated time frame for the development of the project and projected start date of tenant relocation, the applicant advised that (i) tenant relocation will only commence after Building Permit issuance, and (ii) subject to the timing of Building Permit issuance and completion of pre-construction activities, construction could start in June of next year at the earliest.

In reply to a query from the Panel regarding details of the tenant relocation plan associated with the proposed development, staff noted that the tenant relocation plan secured at rezoning includes (i) providing tenants with a minimum of four months' notice to end the tenancy, (ii) offering tenants the option of renting a replacement LEMR unit and the six housing units currently tenanted by VCH clients in the existing development will continue to be offered to VCH in the new development, (iii) offering tenants who have resided in the existing development longer than one year the choice of four months' free rent or lump sum equivalent, exceeding the OCP policy requirement of three months' free rent or lump sum equivalent, and (iv) acknowledging that some tenants may require additional assistance throughout the relocation process.

Susan Campbell (6051 Azure Road) submitted correspondence to the Panel expressing concern regarding hospital personnel and visitors using the neighbourhood for parking and opposition to the subject application moving forward.

Staff noted that (i) staff has followed up with the Richmond resident to confirm that parking needs of the proposed development are provided on-site and there are TDM measures proposed to reduce vehicle ownership, (ii) as directed by Council, staff conducted a consultation with residents in the neighbourhood on the potential of introducing a resident only parking program, and (iii) the completed survey indicated little support for the program, except for one small street in the area, (Alta Court) which is proceeding with the program on a pilot basis.

The Panel expressed support for the project, noting that the proposed development provides 100 per cent rental housing units with a high percentage of family-friendly units and varying levels of affordability.

In addition, staff was directed to work with the applicant to (i) investigate opportunities to install access controls such as signage to the outdoor amenity area from public areas, and (ii) review the treatment of exposed walls along the Azure Boulevard frontage and west property line of the subject site.

In response to direction from the Panel, the applicant has advised that signage will be provided at the bottom of the stair and ramp accesses to the podium level resident outdoor amenity space indicating that it is private property and access is permitted for residents and their guests only.

Further, the screening treatment for exposed walls has been improved with: (i) cable trellis-supported vine planting at the loading bay and north side of the parking entrance along the Azure Boulevard frontage and in areas along the west façade; (ii) an additional area of tiered planters at the northeast corner of the Azure Boulevard frontage; and (iii) at ground level along the west façade, a painted pattern referencing the vertical bay treatment of the upper floors.

The Panel recommends the Permit be issued.