



Advisory Design Panel Report For the Meeting of July 24, 2024

To: Advisory Design Panel **Date:** July 10, 2024
From: Patrick Carroll, Senior Planner
Subject: Rezoning Application No. 00866 for 2501-2699 Blanshard Street, 825/841 Hillside Avenue, 2500-2684 Dowler Place and 900 Kings Road (Evergreen Terrace)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Advisory Design Panel (ADP) is requested to review a Rezoning Application for 2501-2699 Blanshard Street, 825/841 Hillside Avenue, 2500-2684 Dowler Place and 900 Kings Road and provide advice to Council.

The rezoning application is proposing a new site-specific zone in order to permit a phased redevelopment of a BC Housing-owned property known as Evergreen Terrace. The proposal includes approximately 900 housing units in high- and mid-rise forms, with a 37-space childcare space proposed in the first phase. The proposal requires an increase in the allowable height and density, and a Master Development Agreement is required to achieve site, community and citywide objectives, as guided by the *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan*. The proposal includes six buildings that are approximately six storeys in height, three 15-storey buildings and one twenty-storey building.

The proposed density is 2.5:1 floor space ratio (FSR), which is consistent with the property's Housing Opportunity Area urban place designation in the *Official Community Plan* (OCP). The four taller buildings exceed the three to six storey heights generally envisioned for a designated Housing Opportunity Area in the OCP; however, the OCP notes that heights may vary based on site and context. In addition, the *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan* identifies this property as a Special Planning Overlay that accommodates greater heights and densities to meet affordability and community amenity objectives. The proposal would achieve other OCP strategic objectives, including a mix of market and non-market rental housing, replacement of all existing rent geared to income and supportive housing units, two outdoor amenity areas with public access, ample open site space and a relatively high proportion of family friendly housing units.

This is a Rezoning Application without a concurrent Development Permit. The proposed rezoning would set the general massing, density, building heights, building separation and setbacks. Existing applicable design guidelines would be used to assess future Development Permit applications. The Master Development Agreement would secure amenities and other commitments. ADP is asked to review the proposal to ensure successful architectural and urban design outcomes are achieved within future Development Permit applications.

Staff are looking for commentary from the Advisory Design Panel with regard to:

- the proposed distribution of density with specific attention to the siting of taller buildings
- the transitions between proposed buildings and adjacent existing buildings
- the building form and footprint with specific attention to proposed buildings “A-2” and “E-1”
“the impact of shadows on internal public spaces and adjacent properties
- the impact on public views
- any other aspects of the proposal on which the ADP chooses to comment.

The Options section of this report provides guidance on possible recommendations that the Panel may make, or use as a basis to modify, in providing advice on this application.

BACKGROUND

Applicant and Architect: Erica Sangster, Architect AIBC
D’Ambrosio Architecture + Urbanism

Development Permit Area: Development Permit Area 16A, General Urban Design

Heritage Status: Not Heritage Designated

Description of Proposal

The subject property is currently occupied by 23 residential buildings and 1 amenity building, with a mix of townhouses and apartments containing 196 rentals geared to income and supportive housing units. The Rezoning Application is for a new site-specific zone in order to permit a phased redevelopment of the property that proposes approximately 900 housing units in high- and mid-rise forms, a 37-space childcare space, and replacement of all existing rent geared to income and supportive housing units. The proposal includes six buildings that are approximately six storeys in height, three 15-storey buildings and one twenty-storey building. The Rezoning Application includes only the general massing and siting of potential future buildings.

The following data table compares the proposal with the existing R3-2 Zone, Multiple Dwelling District. An asterisk is used to identify where the proposal is less stringent than the existing Zone. Additionally, the key City policy that pertains to the area has been included in this table. An asterisk is used to show where the proposal does not meet the current zone and/or policy.

| Zoning Criteria | Proposal | Zone Standard (R3-2) | OCP Policy | Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan Policy |
|--|---------------|-------------------------|------------|---|
| Site area (m ²) – minimum | 31608.80 | 920.00 | n/a | n/a |
| Density (Floor Space | 2.5:1* | 1.6:1 | 2.5:1 | 2.5:1 |

| Zoning Criteria | Proposal | Zone Standard (R3-2) | OCP Policy | Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan Policy |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------|------------|---|
| Ratio) – maximum | | | | (may exceed based on comprehensive planning) |
| Total floor area (m ²) – maximum | 79045.00 | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Height (m) – maximum | 25 - 71* | 18.5 | n/a | To be based on comprehensive planning |
| Storeys – maximum | 5 - 20* (approximately) | n/a | 3 - 6 | 4 - 6 (may exceed based on comprehensive planning) |
| Open site space (%) – minimum | 50.00* | 60.00 | n/a | n/a |
| Setbacks (m) – minimum | - | - | - | - |
| Blanshard (west) | 10.00m* | 13.5m | n/a | n/a |
| Dowler (east) | 5.00m* | 13.5m | n/a | n/a |
| Kings (east) | TBD | TBD | n/a | n/a |
| Hillside (north) | 7.00m* | 13.5m | n/a | n/a |
| Bay (south) | 7.00m* | 13.5m | n/a | n/a |

Sustainability Features

As outlined in the application package, the following sustainability features are proposed, which will undergo staff review to identify those that exceed existing requirements under applicable legislation and policies:

- Natural rainwater management systems
- All units with mechanical cooling
- Stormwater management prioritizing landscape-based systems (detain and purify)
- High-efficiency drip irrigation

- Landscape plantings of native and appropriate non-native plants
- High-reflectance roof materials
- Solar ready buildings
- Sewage heat recovery (not in phase 1)
- Step code Level 4 (under seven storey)
- Step code Level 3 (seven storey and over).

The provision of proposed and potentially viable sustainability features remains under staff review and specifically Transportation Demand Measures are currently under development and will be secured as part of the rezoning. The rezoning package provides a broad list of potential measures to be secured.

Consistency with Policies and Design Guidelines

Official Community Plan

The subject site is designated Housing Opportunity in the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, which envisions low- and mid-rise multi-unit buildings with heights ranging from three to six storeys depending on site conditions and the existing and envisioned context of the area. In terms of place character features, the OCP envisions residential character public realm featuring landscaping and street tree planting, and mixed-uses in select locations. Low to medium residential densities are envisioned (base of approximately 1.2:1 FSR); however, additional density may be considered where substantial public benefit is provided, such as secured rental projects with additional public benefit (max of approximately 2.5:1 FSR).

Staff consider that the proposal is generally consistent with the uses and density envisioned for a Housing Opportunity Area in the OCP given that substantial public benefit is provided, including a mix of market and non-market rental housing, replacement of all existing rent geared to income and supportive housing units, two outdoor amenity areas for public access, ample open site space and a relatively high proportion of family friendly housing units.

The proposal is inconsistent with the height range generally envisioned for Housing Opportunity Area as the maximum number of storeys prescribed in the OCP is three to six storeys and the proposal is for up to 20 storeys. However, the OCP clarifies that the appropriate height should be informed by on site conditions and the existing and envisioned context of the area. In addition, the *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan* provides specific flexibility in terms of height and guidance for Evergreen Terrace as an identified Special Planning Area (refer below).

Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan

The *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan* identifies this property as a Special Planning Overlay. While the Evergreen Terrace site is designated as a Housing Opportunity Area with the uses, heights and density ranges described above, the Special Planning Overlay signifies that the ultimate uses, heights, and densities on the site should be informed by a comprehensive planning process as well as the principles noted in the plan. The Special Planning Overlay further acknowledges that greater heights and densities may be required to meet these principles, specifically affordability of net new units on-site and expanded community spaces. Given the size, significance and phasing of the site, a Master Development Agreement (MDA) between the City and the property owner is recommended to address site, community and citywide objectives.

In order to guide comprehensive planning for this large and important site the plan outlines principles in the following areas:

- Housing
- Residential and Community Use
- Indoor and Outdoor Amenity Spaces
- Co-location and Partnership
- Built Form and Urban Design
- Access and Mobility
- Environment and Natural Features.

Development Permit Area Design Guidelines

The property is situated in Development Permit Area 16A: General Urban Design and the following documents were considered in assessing this application:

- *Official Community Plan*
- *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan*
- *General Urban Design Guidelines*
- *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Guidelines*
- *Guidelines for Fences, Gates and Shutters.*

The main objectives of the DPA 16A that are relevant to this proposal are:

- to ensure a sensitive transition to nearby areas
- to integrate residential buildings that are complimentary to established place character and enhance character through high quality architecture, landscape and urban design
- to achieve more livable environments through human scaled design, open spaces, safety and accessibility
- to enhance energy and water conservation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

The following section(s) identify and provide a brief analysis of the areas where the Panel is requested to provide commentary. The Panel's commentary on any other aspects of the proposal is also welcome.

Distribution of density

The overall density of the proposal is 2.5:1 FSR and the maximum height is 20 storeys, with the height of four of the ten buildings exceeding the upper limit of six storeys in the OCP for typical properties designated as Housing Opportunity. However, as noted above, the *Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan* identifies this property as a Special Planning Overlay that allows for consideration of greater heights to meet strategic objectives. Although the proposal does provide elements to achieve strategic objectives, staff are highlighting for ADP's consideration the significant increase in height for four buildings, which would impact the existing neighbourhood character in Quadra West and introduce tall buildings north of the downtown.

Staff are looking for commentary from ADP on the appropriateness of the significant increase in height at this location and whether the distribution of massing across the site would benefit from refinement, noting that the other six proposed buildings are not exceeding six storeys. It should be noted that the applicant clarified the proposal for six or fewer storeys would allow for more economical wood frame construction for the mid-rise buildings, which would also lower the embodied carbon of the project and be consistent with climate objectives contained in the DPA

16A, but this places a limitation on redistributing floor area from proposed taller buildings to the mid-rise buildings.

Transitions to nearby buildings

The applicable design guidelines encourage a sensitive transition in scale through reduced massing in upper storeys through upper storey step-backs, appropriate building setbacks and building separation. In addition, the specific guidance for taller buildings encourages that the building base complements adjacent buildings and creates a comfortable street edge definition. To achieve these objectives the building base for tall buildings should be a maximum height of 12m and upper storeys should be set back a minimum of 5m from the established building base.

The main method of introducing transitions in scale in the Design Guidelines is through a tower and podium format and the proposal does incorporate podiums into each of the tall buildings. In addition, the setbacks are shown as a minimum of 10m from Blanshard Street for all buildings, 7m from Hillside Avenue and Bay Street, and 5m from Dowler Place. In addition, a setback of 15m is achieved for portions of buildings above 18m in height. Tall building separation is shown as a minimum of 30m, which adheres to the design guidelines.

Staff are looking for commentary from ADP on the adequacy of the proposal in regard to transitions and to identify any opportunities to improve transitions and prevent new buildings on the subject site from overwhelming the adjacent properties.

Building form

The guidelines encourage slender floor plate sizes for taller buildings and support a greater number of smaller footprint buildings versus fewer larger footprint buildings. The proposal demonstrates smaller floorplates for some of the buildings onsite; however, proposed buildings fronting Hillside Avenue and Bay Street may benefit from reduced footprints and consideration of opportunities to improve the massing of the L-shape buildings in particular. Staff are looking for comments from ADP on whether the massing revisions should be considered.

Shadow impacts

The guidelines prioritize ensuring shading impacts are minimized. Specifically, approximately four hours of cumulative sunlight should be provided on at least 60% of the length of the sidewalk should be achieved at a minimum (between 10 am and 4 pm on the equinoxes) The applicant indicates this objective has been achieved. However, the proposed buildings will have shadowing impacts on the internal public spaces, and one tall building (B-1) is located to the west of the Summit long-term care facility at a distance of approximately 25m, resulting in shadow impacts in the mid to late afternoon at the equinoxes. Staff are looking for comments from ADP on whether the mitigation measures are sufficient to preserve access to light.

Impact on public views

The proposed heights would exceed the height of surrounding development and building heights generally envisioned in the OCP for surrounding urban place designations, which will impact both public views and the overall skyline. Staff are requesting comments from ADP on the impact the proposed height and massing would have and how views are negatively or positively affected.

OPTIONS

The following are three potential options that the Panel may consider using or modifying in formulating a recommendation to Council:

Option One

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Rezoning Application No. 00866 for 2501-2699 Blanshard Street, 825/841 Hillside Avenue, 2500-2684 Dowler Place and 900 Kings Road be approved as presented.

Option Two

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Rezoning Application No. 00866 for 2501-2699 Blanshard Street, 825/841 Hillside Avenue, 2500-2684 Dowler Place and 900 Kings Road be approved with the following changes:

- as listed by the ADP.

Option Three

That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that that Rezoning Application No. 00866 for 2501-2699 Blanshard Street, 825/841 Hillside Avenue, 2500-2684 Dowler Place and 900 Kings Road does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined and that the key areas that should be revised include:

- as listed by the ADP, if there is further advice on how the application could be improved.

ATTACHMENTS

- Subject Map
- Aerial Map
- Plans and Rezoning Book date stamped July 4, 2024
- Applicant's letter dated July 4, 2024.

cc: Erica Sangster, Architect AIBC (D'Ambrosio Architecture + Urbanism)