

Attention: Jim Handy, Senior Planner - Development Agreements

Received
City of Victoria

OCT 29 2018

Planning & Development Department
Development Services Division

Regarding: 90 Saghalie Road. - Aquara Seniors Living Project.
Response to COTW comments from August 2, 2018 & ADP Comments from May 9, 2018.
Date: October 29, 2018.

Dear Jim,

Since our ADP Presentation last year, and our meeting at Committee of the Whole, Element and the design team have made a concerted effort to modify the building design in response to the comments from both ADP, and COTW. The main focus has been to enhance our response to the applicable Design Guidelines, with particular emphasis on site context, topography, and stepping of the building (per Core Songhees Hillside Urban Design Guideline, 2005). We believe that the changes that have been incorporated into the building design are significant, and that the revised design is very much aligned with the relevant the Design Guidelines, and with comments provided by both ADP and COTW. At the same time, the revised building design maintains the project goals of the Element team, to create a high-quality and functional senior's residence in the Bayview Area.

Although not specifically referenced in either ADP Recommendations, or the COTW Motion, we have included in our written comments below some information in response to concerns raised by neighbours during the Open House and public comment process.

Note: Design Responses are indicated below in *italic*, and reference Development Permit drawings and ADP Review package submitted on October 29, 2018. Guidelines are shown in **bold text**.

A. Committee of the Whole Motion

That the proposal be referred back to COTW and the Advisory Design Panel after the applicant has made revisions to the proposed design to terrace the upper storeys of the building and further address site topography, consistent with the applicable Design Guidelines and the objectives of Development Permit Area 3, while maintaining adequate distances between existing buildings.

Applicable Design Guidelines:

- **OCP, 2012.**
- **Advisory Design Guidelenes for Buildings, Signs and Awnings (1981)**
- **Guidelines for Fences, Gates, and Shutters (2010)**

DESIGN RESPONSE: We have reviewed the guidelines above, and they are mostly general in nature, and in our opinion the proposed design of the Aquara project is consistent with these guidelines.

Songhees Hillside Urban Design Guidelines, 2005:

2.3) Lot 4 permits low-rise buildings situated to form a consistent edge to the E&N property and to Tyee Road.

1. The buildings should be articulated opposite Songhees Road to provide and accent a street head vista from Songhees Road to the cul-de-sac at Saghalie Road.

DESIGN RESPONSE: Note this guideline would apply to the design of the building to the West of our site, and is not applicable to our property.



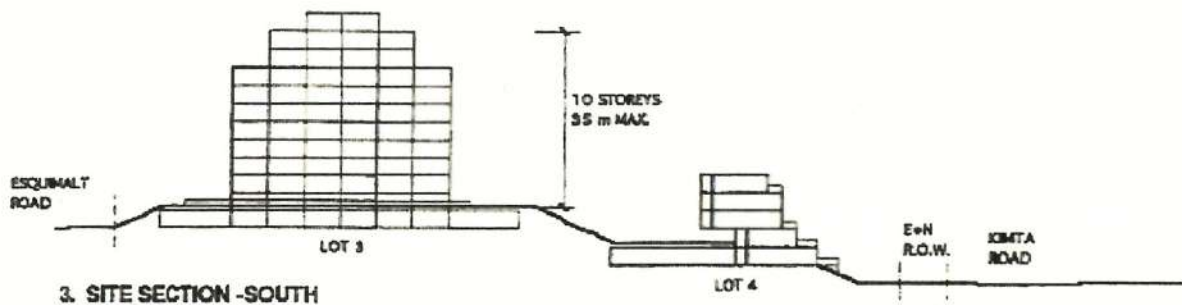
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2. The buildings should be further articulated to provide massing accents at the intersection of Kimta and Tyee Roads.

- *DESIGN RESPONSE:* We have modified the building massing and clarified the architectural forms at the intersection of Tyee Road and Kimta, to create an articulated building element that marks the intersection. We have incorporated a curved element to define the corner, rather than the previous square shape. The curved is more consistent with the organic forms to the natural terrain.

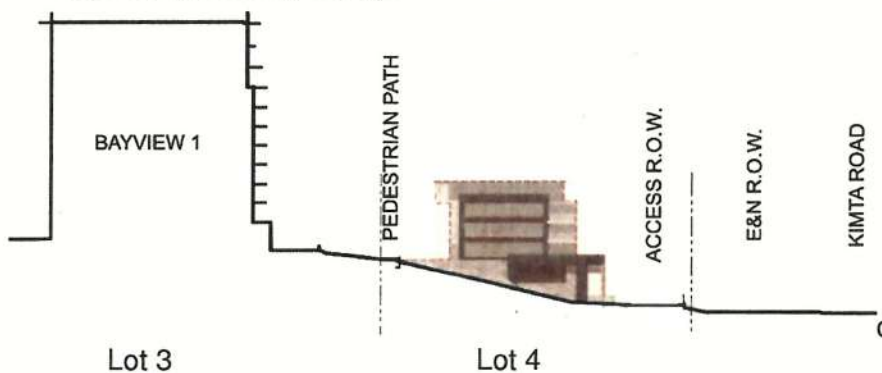
3. In addition, the buildings should be terraced back in a minimum of 2.4m increments along the Kimta and Tyee Roads frontages to soften massing impact.



DESIGN RESPONSE:

- We have redesigned the main floor and the fifth floor to create a more pronounced stepped building form, consistent with the design guideline and the natural topography of the site.

The fifth floor has been set back a minimum of 2.4m from the floors below along the entire length of Kimta to create the terracing effect. While this does shift the top floor closer to the adjacent buildings to the north, in our opinion the 2.4M shift will have little perceptible difference on the separation to Bayview site, and the remaining building separation is more than adequate. With the shift in the upper floor, the the building separation between the Aquara building and Bayview (East) Townhomes is 79', to the (West) Townhomes is 75', and to the Bayview One tower is 135'. The stepped fifth floor has been designed to minimize the visual impact on the north side through individual articulated balconies (rather than one long balcony). New structural columns are expressed along the north façade to create a more interesting building design.



We have added an additional step in the building massing at the ground floor facing Kimta and the lower floors facing Tyee, by introducing new curved frame elements into the building design. The curved frames continue the curvilinear ground plane and planter treatment that we have introduced throughout the entirety of both building frontages, which is a response to the organic forms in the existing site topography and the curved profile of the frontage road.

4. All roofs should be generally flat, except for occasional accents at strategic locations.

- *DESIGN RESPONSE: The roofs of the project are generally flat. There are a number of vertical accents in the façade that 'break up' the massing of the building. These occur in conjunction with the grey metal panel frame elements, generally where the building turns a corner or changes 'direction'. (For example, this occurs at the Kimta and Tyee intersection.) In reviewing the design, we determined that lowering the two black frame elements facing Kimta made for a more harmonious elevation, allowing the entire fifth floor to read as one continuous terrace and reducing projections above the roofline that seemed disproportionate to the project, and that might have impeded views for the neighbouring Bayview One residents.*

B. Advisory Design Panel Motion

That Development Permit for 90 Saghalie Road be approved subject to the following recommendations:

- **Reconsideration of the south elevation form and massing to be more in-harmony with the site topography, context and the Core Songhees Development Permit guidelines.**

DESIGN RESPONSE: Further to the description of design changes above, we have modified building massing to better respond to the ADP Motion, while maintaining the functionality of the building, and respecting the neighbouring Bayview project, as follows:

- *We have changed the design and materials of the interface between grade and the main floor, by introducing curvilinear planter forms with a mixture of stone veneer and concrete finishes, that echo the hillside topography and the curve of the adjacent roadway. This change from orthogonal to curved forms creates a more natural and organic integration between building and the existing context and extends from the planters through the first-floor units. Note the new tall columnar elements are clad in stone to create the required 2-storey stone element.*
- *We heard from design panel that the point where the south building face turns to adjust to the road alignment and hill side shape was awkward. We have modified the massing to change from an angle to a curved frontage at this 'knuckle' in the building.*
- *To further emphasize the topography of the existing curved street edge and the hillside context, we have also incorporated curved forms into the planters facing Tyee Road, so that both of the primary street frontages (Tyee and Kimta) have a similar architectural response to the interface with the existing context at grade - one that re-enforces the natural topography.*
- *As mentioned above, the previous design submission incorporated a significant architectural 'frame' aligned with the main entrance of the building. This component was intended to highlight the main entrance, and to break the parapet line (as discussed with City staff.) In reviewing the overall massing of the south elevation in the context of ADP comments, this architectural element did not align with the overall goal of the DP guideline as it's rectilinear form tended to dominate the façade. We therefore determined on balance to reduce the height*



of this element. Although the parapet is continuous, we believe the overall building appearance is improved, and that the curved elements added to the building are more prominent, in keeping with our approach to meet the Design Guidelines. In proposing this change, we also are considering the goal to minimize projections above the roof line to mitigate the loss of views for the adjacent development.

- **Reconsider the service entrance design including materials, screening, and overall impact on the public realm, including future pedestrian linkages.**

DESIGN RESPONSE: We have modified the service entrance area to provide high quality architectural materials and finishes, including metal panels, to create a more pleasing outlook on this area from the future pedestrian linkage (stairs).

- **Provide additional renderings to show the views throughout the site from the pedestrian pathways.**

DESIGN RESPONSE: We have provided additional renderings and views, including:

- view of the Kimta roadway frontage;
- view of the main building entrance;
- view of the parkade entrance;
- view of the Tyee Road frontage and townhomes;
- aerial overview illustrating the design changes along Kimta.

- **Consider incorporating a permanent shading element on the second floor outdoor amenity space.**

DESIGN RESPONSE: We have shown a shaded space on the upper patio (2nd floor) level. Final design would be subject to any modifications required by VIHA as this outdoor space is part of the licensed care facility.

C. Neighbours' Concerns:

In addition to the above, we wish to comment on concerns that Element and the City has heard from neighbours during their open house process. We note that Element has had three open house sessions with the community to keep them fully advised on the project development and design.

- Use and potential noise issues related to the 4th floor outdoor amenity space.

The outdoor space is intended for family gatherings, contemplation, urban gardening, and for simply being outside for the residents of the building, who will be predominantly seniors. It is not anticipated that any noise would be generated that would cause a nuisance to the neighbours, or contravene City noise by-laws. The building will have 24/7 staffing, which will permit monitoring of activity on the amenity space that might be necessary. In respect to safety, and concerns regarding wind at this location, we will take necessary steps to ensure that any furnishings or other fixtures installed on the amenity space are securely fastened so that they cannot be a danger to adjacent properties.

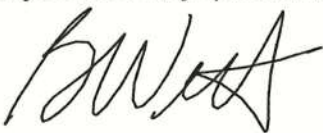
- Roof aesthetic.

We appreciate that some of the residents of Bayview 1 will have a view on to the roof of the Aquara building, and so we have incorporated a curved pattern with a green roof component into the roof design to create a pleasing view. We have also added architectural elements to screen all significant roof equipment from view (no roof is provided over the equipment due to operational requirements.).



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- Impact of Aquara Building on Views for Bayview One.
As per City Staff review, the proposed design fully complies with the Zoning By-Law for building height. That said, we appreciate that there have been concerns expressed by some immediate neighbours that some views will be impacted by the new building. We provide the following:
 - *The overall building height has been set at what we think is the lowest practical elevation, while still maintaining a functional building design.*
 - *The main floor is approximately 18' clear, which allows for a) concealed loading and garbage in an underground garage location, that avoids noise and odours going to adjacent properties and b) high quality common and amenity space on main floor and; c) the fire truck turn around required at the west end of the site.*
 - *The design minimizes architectural features that extend above the roof line, (ie. high parapets and peaked roofs), to minimize interference with views from adjacent properties*
 - *In the current design, the building height has been lowered by 12" from the previous version.*
 - *As a general note, the Aquara project is designed to meet the actual needs of an age-in place residence and realizes the intent of the zoning to provide high quality homes for seniors including amenities and incorporates a fully licensed care facility. The number of residential units and care units proposed is 160, with high quality amenities. By comparison with the extremely schematic building plans provided at the re-zoning, (which had only 95 units), the proposed building has a higher proportion of the permitted 1.79 FAR above grade in order to provide natural light to the 160 dwelling units. We note that the design still incorporates a stepped building form on the west side, from 4 stories to 5 stories.*
 - *We have included a site section showing the relation between the existing Shutters project, Bayview One Tower, and the proposed Aquara project, to demonstrate the relatively small additional impact the Aquara project will have on views for residents of the Bayview One tower building.*
 - Height of Trees.
 - *The trees that will be planted along the northern edge of the Aquara project are intended to provide a pleasant overlook for both Bayview residents, and Aquara residents, and to provide some visual screening between the two developments. They will not interfere with views from Bayview as they will be lower than the Aquara building.*
 - Loss of path to Tyee during construction.
 - *The construction of Aquara will include the building of a new high-quality pathway connection to Tyee road. We recognize that the existing trails will be compromised, however the finished path will provide a safer route for residents and for the community in the long term.*
 - Maintenance issues relating to seagulls and pigeons.
 - *We will ensure that fences, screens, and similar measures are incorporated into the building to mitigate maintenance and nuisance issues.*

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.



Barry Weih – Architect - AIBC

