

Oak Street

CLW Oct 26/09

DISTRICT OF SAANICH

Mayor
Councillors
Administrator
Com. Assoc.
Applicant
Front Counter

Report To: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Date: OCTOBER 9, 2009

From: ANNE TOPP, ACTING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

Subject: DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION ♦ 3371 OAK STREET
FILE: DPR00434

Noticed

Project Details

Project Proposal: Construct a new two storey, 867.7 m² office/car retail building

Address: 3371 Oak Street & 829 Short Street

Legal Description: Lot A, Section 7, Victoria District, Plan VIP79665

Owner: 391105 BC Ltd.

Applicant: Alan Lowe Architect Inc.

Application Received: October 1, 2009

Parcel Size: 2478 m²

Existing Use of Parcel: Vacant

Existing Use of Adjacent Parcels:
 North: Multi-family Residential (C-5)
 South: Nissan Car Dealership (C-6DE)
 East: Single Family Dwelling (RS-6) with an approved application for multi-family Development awaiting final reading
 West: Suburban Car Dealership (C-6DE)

Current Zoning: C-6DE (Douglas East Highway Commercial Zone)

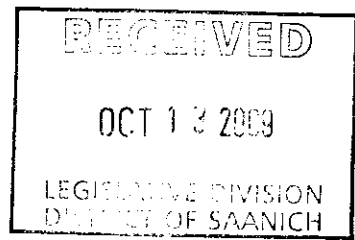
Minimum Lot Size: n/a

Proposed Zoning: n/a

Proposed Minimum Lot Size: n/a

Local Area Plan: Saanich Core

LAP Designation: Douglas Street East Commercial/Industrial Corridor, Saanich Core Development Permit Area



Community Assn Referral: Mt View-Colquitz Community Assn • October 2, 2009

Planning Policy

The site is located within the Douglas Street East Commercial/Industrial Corridor in the Saanich Core Local Area Plan and the Saanich Core Development Permit Area. The site design and building form will be considered against the following guidelines:

- Guideline 3: The scale of new development should reflect the urban character of the Saanich Core.
- Guideline 14: Design plan should meet the intent of the standards set out in the Landscaping and Screening Guidelines for Commercial/Industrial /Multi-Family and Public Uses in Development Permit Areas (adopted in 1987)
- Guideline 16: Design plans should meet the intent of the standards set out in the Saanich Bicycle Parking Guidelines.
- Guideline 17: Buildings for commercial or mixed use should be designed for a human scale to increase street level opportunities for social interaction and the creation of a vibrant pedestrian environment. This may include expanding the pedestrian environment on the development site, treating the building as an integral component of the streetscape and ensuring windows are provided and not blanked out.
- Guideline 18: Pedestrian networks, through and adjacent to the site should be designed to welcome people, encourage pedestrian activity, and integrate with and link to larger public spaces. Pedestrian amenities must be of sufficient width for an urban environment, have appropriate lighting, and be well landscaped to create a safe walking environment for people of all ages and levels of mobility. Street furniture, paving materials, traffic calming devices, sign plans and public art are examples of elements that should be considered.
- Guideline 19: Public spaces should be created adjoining the street and/or within the site as a complementary extension of the pedestrian network and connect to ground floor access where possible. These spaces should provide both sunny and shaded spaces, a range of seating opportunities, have natural surveillance from adjacent buildings and create spaces that foster gathering, contemplation, relaxation and celebration. Wherever possible public spaces should be sited to respect and enhance important view corridors.
- Guideline 21: Architecture should be of high quality that is contemporary and authentic. Innovative use of durable and high quality materials is expected. Elevations of buildings adjacent to a street should incorporate varied architectural elements and landscaping or smaller store front businesses to avoid big blank walls.

Background

The site consisting of three properties was consolidated and rezoned to C-6DE (Douglas East Highway Commercial Zone) in 2005. Since then the site has been the subject of a number of applications. Development Permit DPR2007-00020 provided for a new 1525 m² building to house an Infiniti car dealership including show room, office and service garage. A significant consideration by Council when originally rezoning this site in 2005 was the possibility that the original office /retail building would be demolished and no significant building would be placed on the corner to assist in creating a new gateway into Short Street. Council requested a restrictive covenant to ensure that this corner would not become a "parking lot" and that a building of not less than 500 m² would always exist in this location.

Subsequently, following the economic decline a Development Permit Amendment DPA00669 was approved, but not ratified, to allow the site to be used as a vehicle storage area. As part of that application a commitment to complete the revised street improvements was made.

Proposal

The current proposal is to build a new Infiniti dealership building. The proposed new 867.78 m² building is two stories in height and would provide a show room and office space. The Oak Street front setback area will contain spaces for two, raised, hard surface car display areas with some landscape planting. Both Short Street and Oak Street will be constructed with new a pedestrian streetscape.

The Campus Nissan Car Dealership located to the south at 3361 Oak Street is also owned by the applicant and his family. The service garage for the Infiniti Dealership is proposed to be on the nearby site at 3347 Oak Street (a.k.a. "Hashna Court"), which was damaged by fire in 2008. The same applicant has made a separate Development Permit application (DPR00435) for the reuse of that site.

Analysis

Neighbourhood Context

This site is within the Uptown Saanich major centre which is starting to transform through redevelopment to a more pedestrian/transit-oriented urban form. Town and Country is a significant element of this transformation. The immediate neighbourhood on Short Street is already contributing to this vision through the predominantly mixed-use residential four to six storey multi-family buildings and the construction of an enhanced pedestrian environment. The remaining parcels along Short Street have already been approved for multi-family residential use which will further strengthen this vision of pedestrian-oriented urban neighbourhood.

Oak Street has the potential to form a significant north-south pedestrian street that links Uptown at Town and Country to Mayfair Mall. As redevelopment occurs, over time, it is expected that more mixed use residential and commercial will co-exist along this street which is located between the car oriented Blanshard Street and the transit oriented Douglas Street.

Development Permit Guidelines

The applicable development permit guidelines address pedestrian environments, public spaces, architecture and landscaping.

Pedestrian Environment

As a corner site, this development will have an impact on both Short and Oak Streets.

The pedestrian environment along both these streets has been the subject of considerable design discussion. The proposed improvements on Short Street are the same as previously agreed to as part of the parking lot Development Permit with a new 2 m wide sidewalk and a landscape boulevard with a row of new boulevard trees that will contribute to creating a more pedestrian friendly environment. The slightly smaller building will also provide space for some additional on site landscaping along this frontage. The inclusion of architectural details wrapping around the corner and along this frontage will also aid in creating the transition on Short Street into the residential neighbourhood.

The Oak Street pedestrian features are equally important in creating a good pedestrian environment for the long term Major Center development. The applicant has worked in collaboration with Saanich staff to illustrate a 3 m sidewalk with boulevard trees within the landscape area between the building and the sidewalk. A bench will be included in the pedestrian area near the corner. This is particularly important in this location because of our aging population and the existing hill.

As part of the landscape treatment, two raised decorative pavement areas, located within the building setback, are intended to display cars. This is a significant streetscape element that council has addressed in the past and accepted as part of a dealership business. Note that a similar vehicle display area is in place on the parcel to the south and the application for the redevelopment of the burnt out Hashna Court building is also illustrating the same vehicle display area in the required landscaped area.

Architecture

As part of the original rezoning, a covenant requiring any new building to be "not less than 560 m² gross floor area" was registered. The proposed building size exceeds this requirement.

While somewhat smaller than originally proposed, the architectural design meets the Development Permit guidelines to create a building of contemporary architecture with high quality materials. Significant elements are the vertical transparent glazing that emphasises the front entrance, the curved roof element, aluminium composite panels and the inclusion of a bank of windows along the Short Street elevation. This will improve the character of the streetscape.

Trees & Landscaping

The landscape plan is predominately hard surface and low maintenance planting. Six boulevard trees are to be removed and replaced with new boulevard trees along Short Street and Oak Street as per Schedule I requirements. Additional columnar shaped trees will be planted onsite. The Parks Department recommends that at the detailed engineering stage sufficient soil volume be provided to ensure the boulevard trees have adequate root zone soil volume. This element is important to ensure that boulevard trees are given the best conditions to reach their full growing maturity and thereby be a real contribution to the pedestrian environment and the "urban forest".

VariANCES

Setback Variance

The proposed site development is consistent with the move toward a more urban form in the Short Street area. A building setback variance from 3.75 m to 1.02 m on Short Street is required and acceptable. Also, the proposal requires a variance to reduce from 3.75 m to 1.02 m the requirement for the provision of continuous landscaping where no parking is provided between the street and a building. The provisions of a continuous landscape treatment along Short Street, and Oak Street, including new wider sidewalks and new trees along the frontage to create a greener urban environment for pedestrians will mitigate the reduced setback.

Parking and Vehicle Loading Variance

The Zoning Bylaw requires that 25 parking spaces be provided on site. The site plan meets the requirement of 25 parking stalls and in addition provides 13 tandem stalls. While not ideal, this arrangement can be managed on site because some of the parking is for vehicle inventory parking and other tandem sites can be dedicated to employee parking.

A variance to not require a dedicated off-street loading space is requested. The expectation is that most loading would occur on Oak Street or within the manoeuvring aisle of the adjacent Nissan Dealership. Vehicle access for the Infiniti Dealership would be provided by way of a shared entrance and driveway located on the adjacent Nissan Dealership property at 3361 Oak Street thereby enabling this area to be used for loading.

To protect the access and loading a registered access easement is required over the parcel known as 3361 Oak Street in favour of 3371 Oak Street. Bike parking is provided in the way of four wall mount bike stalls located within the building and four uncovered bike parking stalls within the hard landscaped area fronting Oak Street.

Advisory Design Panel

The application is proposed to be considered by the Advisory Design Panel at their October 21, 2009 meeting. A separate communication from the ADP will convey their recommendation on the current design.

Summary

The applicant proposes to build a new contemporary building with 867.78 m² of retail/office space to house the Infiniti Car Dealership within the Uptown Major Centre. Enhancements to improve the pedestrian environment on Short Street are proposed by providing 2 m separate sidewalks with a parking bay, trees and boulevard treatment. Along Oak Street a 3 m sidewalk standard is proposed with appropriate boulevard trees back of the sidewalk.

Proposed variances for building setback, vehicle loading and requirement for depth of landscaping along Short Street are supportable.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Development Permit DPR2007-00020 be rescinded.
2. That Development Permit DPR00434 be approved.
3. That prior to ratification of the Development Permit approval the following is required.
 - a) Registration of easement agreement and restrictive covenants for shared driveway.
 - b) Submission of Landscape plans indicating the provision of two benches adjacent to Oak Street, revision to tree species in accordance with Parks department requirements, and a note indicating an installation detail to ensure provision of adequate soil volume for boulevard tree planting.

Report prepared by:

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Chuck Bell, Planner

Report reviewed by:

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Anne Topp, Acting Director of Planning

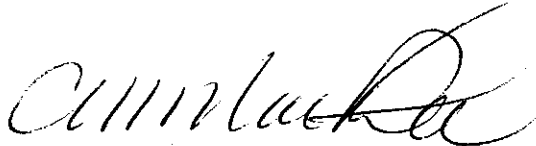
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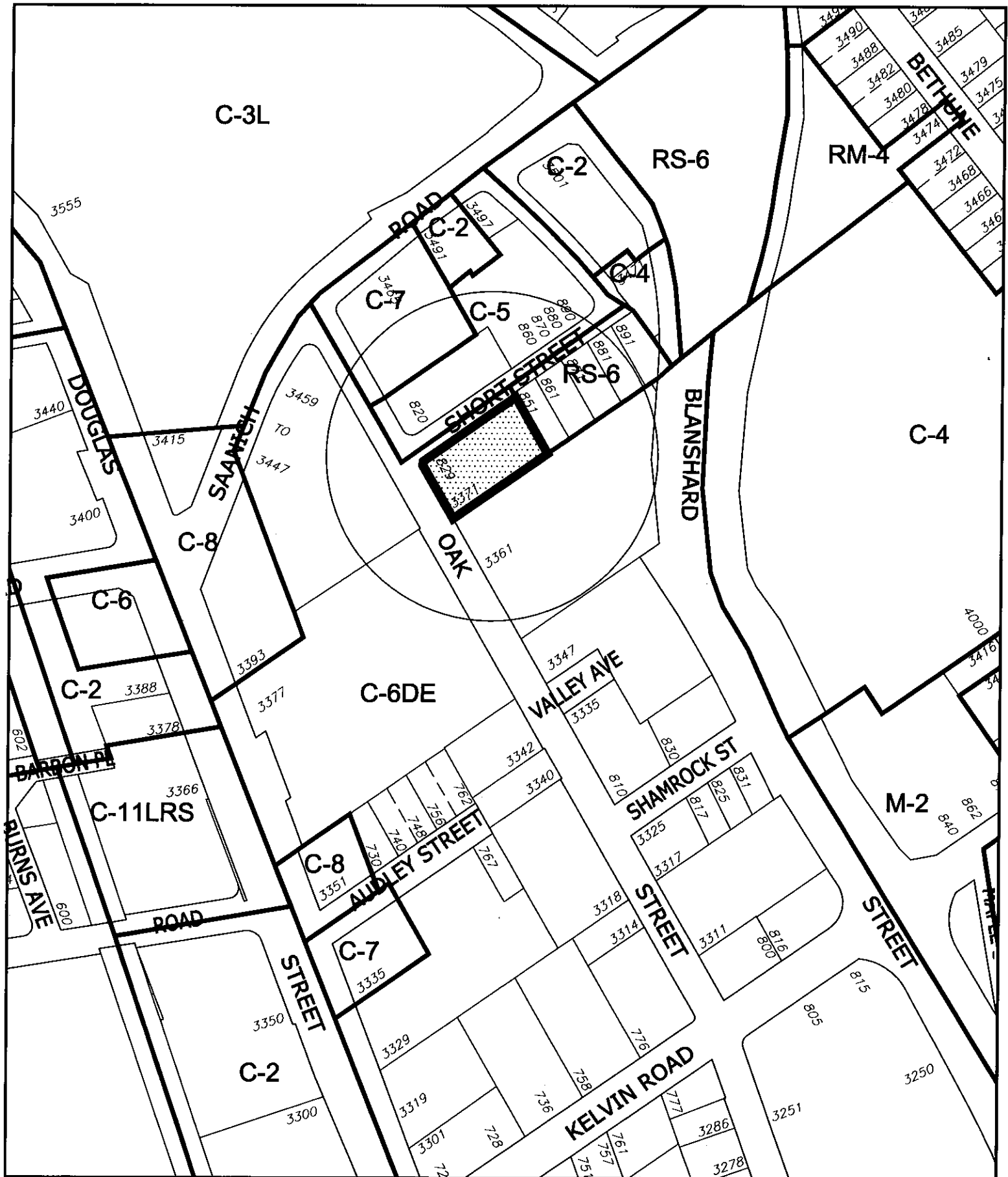
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Attachment

cc: T. Wood, Municipal Administrator
N. Jablanczy, Manager of Inspection Services**ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:**

I endorse the recommendation of the Acting Director of Planning

*for*
Tim Wood, Municipal Administrator



District of Saanich
 Planning Department
 Date: SEPT. 5 2009