

March 22, 2019

Mike Kirkegaard,
Director of Planning
Resort Municipality of Whistler
4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, BC

Re: Project Brief, Parcel A, Whistler, BC

Context

Murdoch & Company has been retained by The Whistler Development Corporation to develop a master plan for a multi-family development site at on Parcel A in an area commonly referred to in previous planning reports as the "Upper Lands" in the Cheakamus Crossing community south of Whistler Village. The site is located on the north eastern side of the subdivision backing onto a very pronounced rock knoll to the south and an existing forest service road to the east. The site was once used as a temporary housing / office location during the 2010 Winter games and has since sat as an overflow parking area for the community residents. The site has been levelled and graded with some subtle terracing as you move to the east on the site. Access is directly off an extension of Mt. Fee Road on a gently graded road bed and has some slotted views to the east with a feature view up to the peak of Whistler. The site has been designated as one of three development parcels in the upper lands. The parcel is generally level comparatively when compared to the other two parcels which have significant terrain features and environmental constraints impacting their development opportunity. Parcel A had been allocated as a significant apartment site in earlier planning documents, while the other two parcels are better suited to smaller density that can be clustered and scribed to the terrain in a more refined manner.

Project Objectives

The purpose and objectives for the project are very much aligned with recent Master plans initiated by the RMOW on the recommendation of the Mayors Task Force. Development studies were prepared to define a development program for further development of municipally owned lands in the neighbourhood with the primary purpose of providing additional resident restricted housing in the community. Those primary objectives are as follows;

- To successfully integrate a residential complex on the site, that provides a variety of housing options.
- Create a liveable, attractive and integrated addition to the existing neighbourhood with appropriate units types that are geared towards an active family lifestyle
- Provide housing as affordable as possible while being financially feasible
- Minimize site coverage and to increase green space and landscaped areas, with an optimized parking density above the currently zoned reduced density.
- Provide built and landscaped compositions based on local materials, indigenous plants that integrate the building into the natural environment and offer a strong connection to local environment.
- Provide communal spaces for gathering and play as part of the project development
- Enhance connections and pathways to the larger landscape and existing local routes
- Encourage building massing which takes into consideration orientation, sun exposure, framing of view corridors and sightlines while maximising the solar aspect on site and neighbouring spaces
- Develop an architectural expression consistent with neighbour character, which responds to local context, climate and scale, respects the integrity of materials and encourages their use in a manner that is environmentally responsible
- To provide adequate off-street parking, situated undercover and off street

Site Planning Objectives

Parcel A is the first of several development parcels in the Upper Lands. The project reflects the need for more modest affordable housing in the neighborhood with a strategy that balances the site development with a very strong interface with the natural environment.

"The Cheakamus Area Legacy Neighbourhood is set in a natural landscape that contains a number of extraordinary features unique to this part of the Municipality. The Cheakamus River is the most prominent natural feature in the area and embodies the energy of this site. As it flows through this area, the Cheakamus cascades through a deep gorge, sometimes raging as whitewater, giving the area a dramatic sense of wildness. Basalt formations and rocky knolls provide a natural structure to the site and reveal the geological history of the area giving a sense of rugged strength and solidity."

The main objective for the first of many buildings in the upper lands is to build upon the legacy established by the buildings built in and around the neighbourhood centre in terms of form and character but be more sensitive to the interface with the natural environment and personality of the forest setting. The existing neighbourhood core has a subtly more urban feel, the strategy going forward for the upper lands is to create a pattern where the character of the landscape is expressed in a more tactile and tangible manner and de-emphasize the domination of road network and scribe the roads and building to the natural terrain. It is also our goal to create an improved unit / street relationship to enhance the pedestrian quality within the neighbourhood.

The site has been largely cleared and used for the past several years as an overflow parking area. The creation of Parcel A has been adjusted to fit between the existing FSR road to the east, an environmental sensitive area to the east and west and the rocky knoll to the south. The road alignment has been modified to find a best fit along the edge of the knoll and climb up through Parcel A to provide access to multiple future development pods and service the existing users of the FSR road. The building arrangement in parcel A has been organized so that the natural characteristics of the knoll, wetland(s), existing trails and terrain are maintained.


Design Objectives

The massing has been arranged into two separate buildings over a single terraced underground parking structure. Each building has slightly different characteristics which allows for subtly different orientation, placement, unit mix, with some terracing to reflect the modulation in the terrain. The goal was to work with building masses similar in size to what has been typically used in the existing neighbourhood core but create some distinctiveness between each mass to create some greater variety so that the scale is consistent with other multi storey buildings in the neighbourhood.

Building massing and finishes will be a distinctly modern interpretation of the community design guidelines with low slope roofs, durable materials, high performance building systems and colors that suggest a strong relationship to site and local colors and textures. The building program will enhance the liveability of residents and provide amenities well suited for those living an active Whistler Lifestyle, including, functional parking, garbage, recycling, storage, laundry services.

Landscaping will be primarily native plant material with some site disturbance to scribe buildings to existing contours and balance site excavation with some recontouring for efficient execution of the project within the larger parcel / road grading. Larger retaining features are minimized with some gentle terracing of grades to blend into existing conditions. Common areas, improved street relationship, and gathering areas have been provided to encourage interaction and use to establish a sense of presence and pride within the tenants. Plant materials, textures, products and products will all be selected to fit the native environment with an emphasis on durability performance and seasonal variety. Snow management will be handled via the building architecture (ie holding snow) with some snow storage on site to maintain appropriate clearing travel paths, parking and routes through the site.

Respectfully



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 4325 Blackcomb Way, Whistler, BC

Re: Design Rationale, Parcel A, Whistler, BC

In addition to the original overarching Cheakamus Crossing Design Guidelines I would add that we have made a concerted effort to be fiscally responsible so that housing is developed in a balanced manner to fit the new reality of affordability and high performance durability. As affordable housing increasingly becomes a larger issue regionally we need to be very strategic with how we execute the projects in a sensible, comprehensive manner and focus on the resolution across all projects types and scales. The creation of Parcel A has been adjusted to into it's immediate context and address the first priority of providing housing on the short term. The site had been identified by previous studies as a site well suited for an apartment building with approx 100-125 units. The remainder of the parcel is also slated for development with smaller scale buildings and cluster more suited to the undulation terrain. The road alignment has been modified to find a best fit along the edge of the knoll and climb up through Parcel A to provide access to multiple future development pods and service the existing users of the FSR road. The building arrangement reflects a strong sense of the immediate landscape and has been organized so that the natural characteristics of the knoll, wetland(s), existing trails and terrain are maintained and not dismissed. The building is adjacent a highly developed trail network and has been positioned to allow a continuity in those trails / roads to access the larger landscape. Several additional enhancements have been made to ensure that the building occupants feel connected to both new, existing pathways and provides for the opportunity of future routes and common spaces throughout the upper lands.

The scale of the building is consistent with other recently approved neighbourhood projects. (see the attached schedule) Some effort has been made to scale the buildings to an effective project size that has efficiency without being out of scale with the neighbourhood. Each building has a subtly different orientation, placement, unit mix, with some terracing to fit into the modulation in the terrain. Although it is not expected that the development "upstream" of parcel A will be as large or on a similar scale it was seen that this site presented an opportunity to deliver a larger project soon to make a credible impact on the lack of affordable housing. With no parcel specific design guidelines unlike some of the neighbourhood centre buildings we have made our best interpretation for what we feel is appropriate by extrapolating the main design guidelines from the first phase of Cheakamus Crossing for their use in the next phase.

Building materials and finishes will be a modern interpretation of the coast mountain architectural vernacular with low slope roofs, durable materials, high performance building systems and colors that suggest and strong relationship to site with subdued colors and textures.

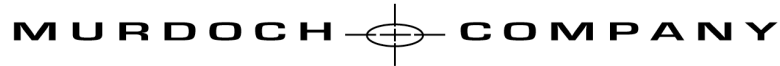
Some site disturbance is expected to scribe buildings to existing contours and balance site excavation with some recontouring for efficient execution of the project within the larger parcel / road alignment. Landscape materials and products will all be selected to fit the native environment with an emphasis on durability and performance and minimize the need for highly maintenance.

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August 26, 2020

Att: Mike Kirkegaard, director of Planning
The Resort Municipality of Whistler
4325 Blackcomb Way
Whistler, BC, V8E 0X5

Re: Parcel A - ADP Response - Design Summary, Whistler, BC

Mike,

Clearly there was good support from ADP for the project and therefore we felt it was important to maintain the design intent and work with the Client / Consultant team to ensure that the form and character as presented was honored and maintained through to the construction.

Status

The project has advanced through the design development phase and contract documentation stage and we are looking to submit the entire project for Building Permit in the very near future. Since the Design Panel presentation the project has worked the on relationship of the adjacent access road it's route and associated grading with the team looking at the civil servicing of Parcel D and managed to maintained the same relationship to grade and setbacks with only very minor adjustments to suit building and grading tolerances at the road interface. Minor landscape adjustments to grading have been completed to meet building code standards and preferred design guidelines for accessibility. A phased grading plan has been established for the rear of the site through multiple discussions with the RMOW staff and authorities having jurisdiction over the adjacent FSR. The form and character of the architecture has remained consistent with the concept presented at ADP with only subtle changes to materials in a few select areas based on material performance and appropriateness related to durability or constructability. The underground areas below grade have had some additional manipulation but only to accommodate engineering specs and efficiencies in layout, no net loss of bicycle parking or automobile parking has occurred.

ADP Response

As per your request I have completed response to the ADP comments provided (see below);

Site Context and Circulation / Accessibility

1. Project siting and building articulation has been maintained with only subtle adjustment to suite detail site and road grading.
2. Minimal streetside parking / drop off / temporary move in stalls have been maintained with more substantial parking at the designated trailhead across the street.
3. Communal Spaces on the upper floor, lobby, laundry and landing locations have been maintained to permit small gatherings (bubbles) of neighbors to permit casual interactions common to neighbors while still providing healthy social distancing. These spaces can not be closed off due to code requirements.
4. General pattern and texture on the exterior of the buildings has been maintained as supported.

Building Massing, Architecture Form and Character

1. Project has maintained the two dissimilar building massing strategy as proposed with no net loss or gain in units or GFA.
2. Building articulation, patterning and orientation is also consistent with ADP concept.
3. Phased grading strategy has been established to manage the interim access requirements of the FSR with input from RMOW staff, and other agencies having jurisdiction. Long term grading with

result in removal of valley trail in lieu of direct access to Riverside trail network and “feathering” of grades overtop of the current FSR to blend the site into the existing forest with enhanced plantings of trees and shrubs.

4. Central space has been maintained with necessary refinements to allow for infrastructure, subtle grading of slopes to encourage positive drainage and appropriate planting over top of structures where necessary.

Materials, Colours and Lighting

1. The project had originally been presented with both buildings having only a single colour scheme. The Client group was in agreement with ADP and felt that both buildings although having similar materiality should be distinct with regards to base building color. Building A will maintain the same scheme as originally proposed and building B will move to a subtly more taupe exterior base color to blend with the forest landscape while still adhering to the general neighborhood guidelines for “natural forest color palette”. Tones and textures of ascent items will be consistent between both buildings to ensure a similar vocabulary but also maintain some cost efficiencies. Some further exploration of detail color selection has not yet been determined.

Panel offers the following comments.

Site Context and Circulation, including accessibility

1. Panel in general support of the project and appreciates the improvements to the articulation of the façade.
2. Panel noted significant improvement to the streetscape particularly how that street side parking access works.
3. Panel in support of the communal spaces on both the fourth floor and the laundry room. Consider increasing the size of the communal spaces and allow for more programming of these spaces with potential to close them off.
4. Panel appreciates the grain, materials and articulation of the buildings.

Building Massing, Architecture Form and Character

1. Panel appreciates the breakdown of the two buildings to allow for more urban form in a forest setting.
2. Panel appreciates the elegant massing and sophisticated design.
3. Consider the significant grading at the back side of the building and come up with a solution to deal with that along the valley trail.
4. Panel appreciates extension of the central outdoor area and the approach to the building and that it is now part of the landscape.

Materials, Colours and lighting

1. Consider two different colour schemes for the building along with more colour within each building for further breakdown of massing. The colour palette reads as monochromatic and muted.

Moved by Peter Lang
Seconded by Pat Wotherspoon

That the Advisory Design Panel supports the project as shown and the applicant should work with staff to ensure careful attention to meeting grade or sides, that the size of social spaces are appropriate and can be programmed in multiple ways, and to consider possibilities in regard to colour and variation between buildings and explore potential for breakdown of colour within buildings.

Best Regards



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