

driftwood gibsons

PROJECT SUMMARY

Date: October 2021

Overview: General Design

Driftwood Gibsons is a mixed-use project with commercial at grade level and proposed 14 residential units on the upper levels. The development is located next door to the Heritage Playhouse, at the intersection of North Road and Gibsons Way – the gateway between Lower and Upper Gibsons, with walking access to both.

While having only one circulation corridor, the residential units are spread onto three levels, taking advantage of the nature of the sloped terrain. Five of the suites are single level, while the remaining seven have a walk-up or walk-down condition. All residential units are designed to have views to the south – providing ocean and marina views to residents and maximizing a sense of connection to the heart of Gibsons' heritage waterfront.

Driftwood Gibsons' unique contemporary design distinguishes the project from surrounding buildings, while still respecting the surrounding context through use of colour and materials. The materiality and expression of the building evokes the natural landscape of the Sunshine Coast, using the spirit and colours of natural driftwood on the cladding, and playing with the tones of natural wood when the volume of the building is carved to allow for outdoor rooms. With hues similar to those found on the local beaches, Driftwood Gibsons carries a palette that promotes subtle colours and textures all directed to enhancing the residential component, while allowing for the pragmatism of glass to evidence the commercial space below.

Sustainability

Driftwood Gibsons has been conceived as an environmentally and socially responsible building. The developer and architect believe strongly in future-proofing all developments and minimizing the impact of development on the environment by designing efficient spaces that encourage major changes in the way we live, reducing energy use and reconfiguring community living by encouraging efficient typologies. The developer wishes to push this even further, achieving PassiveHaus standards, and if possible, certification, and making Driftwood Gibsons an example of an economically feasible sustainable development. From the construction materials chosen to the landscaping elements used, every care will be taken to minimize this project's impact on the beautiful ecosystem of the Sunshine Coast.

Building Scale and Massing

Designed as a modest development, the bulk of the Driftwood Gibsons building does not occupy the entire site's footprint, but rather allows for ample landscaping, a commercial unit plaza, and parking around the building, reducing the feeling of mass covering the site. We have reduced the density that the site will allow to the bare minimum while still working with the parking implications required. What this means is that rather than maximizing unit density with a three-storey 30-unit building and two underground levels of parking, we've decided to approach a less aggressive scheme where we don't impact the landscape with excavation and we reduce the massing impact on site.

The public's street experience from the west is that of only two units and the entry, as it minimizes the elevation to that of a duplex. All residential programming (i.e., elevator, lobby, stair core) is oriented toward the street, while commercial manifests completely on the south side of the building, facing the Heritage Playhouse. We are seeking opportunities of interactions between the Playhouse and the commercial unit.

The sense of the building's mass is also mitigated by the use of glazing at grade level – allowing light to penetrate through the building, promoting a sense of permeability and north/south connection. The suspended design of the residential levels makes the building seem to hover, thus further breaking up the sense of the massing. In addition, the building adapts to the sloping site forming two clusters at different grades throughout three levels to separate the building into two volumes.

Building Wall Design

The prevailing exterior design for the upper volume will be weathered cedar-like wood siding in a randomized pattern, while every incision (i.e., balcony, returns, fragmentation of the massing) takes on the colours of a fresh cut on a found piece of weathered timber.

Glazing is chosen for the grade level to enhance a sense of permeability, not a “wall”, providing an attractive contrast with the upper levels clad in natural coloured wood siding, reflecting the coastal setting of Gibsons.

Additional visual interest will be provided by breaking up the massing with the introduction of subtle earth and sea colours on window frames and railings; colours inspired by local fibre arts and marine wildlife.

Roof Design

The roof system is vaulted at the interior, providing a sense of space and lightness. The exterior of the roof will be a metal standing seam system in a pitched roof design that plays on the rural barn-like typologies of the area. The roof line is broken mid-building as the building follows the east-west slope, broken into two configurations that offer a reversed pitch. The east volume maximizes exposure to the south, while the west volume minimizes its pitched roof to the south, thus serving as a shield to itself and to the east volume.

The essential roof design plays on First Nations longhouse volumes, while striving to follow PassivHaus construction that demands the eradication of unnecessary roof line complications that result in efficiency loss. The location of the roof ridge lines is carefully chosen to minimize shadow impact and volumetric legibility at streetscape.

Galvanized metal standing seam or inverted standing seam will be targeted for roof cladding, with the target of seamless gutters to minimize the intervals of downspouts.

Integration with Surrounding Areas

Driftwood Gibsons is designed to complement the immediate surrounding streetscape. Care has been taken to ensure the building does not have a negative impact on views or shadows cast on adjacent properties. The building is sited towards the south of the lot to allow for more space between the current single-family property to the north.

The inclusion of a commercial unit at grade and welcoming landscaping close to the sidewalk will ensure pedestrian circulation is encouraged and may enhance the attractiveness of the neighbouring amenities such as the Heritage Playhouse and St. Bartholomew’s Church.

Retaining walls will be terraced to reflect the sloping site where applicable and will not exceed 4ft in height.

The development is oriented with all residential units having views to the south, allowing residents to have a visual connection with the heart of Gibsons marina.

Sense of Place: Development Identity

A welcoming, well-defined entry is provided, with a lit building name sign facing the street, contributing to the residents’ sense of belonging to place.

Street level landscaping provides some privacy within the development and parking stalls are recessed away from the street to ensure the pedestrian entry is favoured.

Amenity Space: Private Areas

Each residential unit will feature a minimum of one generous balcony with southern views. Each balcony is semi-enclosed to provide a feel of an outdoor room – giving privacy, security, and shelter from the elements. The design ensures that no two balconies are adjacent to further ensure resident privacy.

Site amenity areas are included in the landscape plan, and include benches, garden walkways, and a potential children’s play area.

Amenity Space: Fitness Centre and Co-working Space

The building will offer residents a fitness centre and a shared workspace, enhancing the health and wellbeing of residents and encouraging a vibrant remote work culture.

Landscaping

Street level landscaping will include private meditative seating areas, group seating areas and varied walking pathways around the site. The inclusion of a driftwood-themed play area is being considered to provide a healthy and attractive place for families to enjoy recreation.

Trees will be planted along the street edge of the site to provide a boulevard feel and extensive landscaping using both evergreen and deciduous will provide visual interest and a healthy environment throughout the seasons.

The south of the property will be split into an upper plaza primarily serving the commercial unit, and a lower plaza serving the residents. In addition to the change in grade, the commercial patio will be separated from the residential gardens by attractive privacy screens and other landscaping elements. The inclusion of irrigation via stormwater infiltration throughout the landscaping is being studied. Also proposed is a permeability between the Driftwood Gibsons site and the neighbouring Heritage Hall, via the use of walkways and lighting.

The landscape plan also includes earth berms in conjunction with low retaining walls and vegetation facing the street to work with natural contours, minimizing excavation and shielding from vehicle noise and visual pollution.

Fencing

Street facing fencing is not envisaged at this time as intelligent landscaping should provide the required privacy and interest. Fencing is proposed surrounding the parking area, as well as the lower patio. The fence at the lower patio is proposed as a powder coated aluminum fence with cedar inlay, and will provide screening and a sense of enclosure to the residents using the lower patio. The fence surrounding the parking area is proposed at 6' ht., dark grey metal frame with vertical metal pickets, and will provide a measure of security while remaining visually permeable.

Parking Areas and Vehicle Access

Parking is provided at grade, with some stalls being located under the partial cover of the east portion of the building overhang. Visitor stalls will be located close to the entrance and clearly marked. Parking will be screened from neighbouring properties through landscaping and by the volumetric nature of the building's footprint.

Signage and Lighting

Building signage will be provided at or below eye level facing the street to enhance the project identity and to give residents a sense of belonging. All other signage shall be modest in size and designed with an elegant yet quiet pride, so as not to present a cluttered look.

Building lighting will all be down-focused and will be used to provide a welcoming entrance, providing safety and security without causing undue light-spill. Parking and landscape lighting will be night-sky friendly and low voltage, complying with prescriptive ASHRAE guidelines, exceeding industry standards.

Central Recycling Area

A well-lit, ventilated garbage and recycling room is provided, within easy reach of each unit. The room is designed with washable surfaces with hose bib on site and is designed to be wildlife safe and easily serviceable to third party waste management services.

Stormwater Management and Drainage

While this project is not within the Upper Gibsons Neighbourhood Plan, we nevertheless aim at servicing stormwater management passively, by gravity-fed connections to the south, using the new infrastructure that the Town of Gibsons has implemented, via an RoW or similar through the Heritage Playhouse site. For drainage we shall connect through the north-east corner with the existing infrastructure. We will try to bring all watershed run-off runoff from roofs to irrigation systems where possible.