

March 22<sup>nd</sup> AAC Related Meeting – Accessible/ Adaptable Housing

4-5pm

Attendance: Sandra, Nate, Jenna, Charlotte

### Minutes

Charlotte Intro- responsible for Harris Green site

Charlotte giving background:

- Council is taking a serious look at how applications are meeting accessibility standards
- Built over 3 phases 1500 units – 100% rental primarily market, element of affordable housing
- For discussion today – Applicant was initially proposing that 5% of units across phases to be “adaptable” under BC Building Code
- Applicant’s consultation – with Council showed a desire for units to be fully accessible, not just adaptable
- BC building code doesn’t have definition of “accessible” typically we default to definition of adaptable
- Adaptable makes sense when building is owned by end user
  - because this is rental, its difficult to monitor what applicant has done after the fact
- For London Drugs site (900 block and 1045 Yates Street) this equates to 80 units – want it to be built to the best standards that really captures everyone’s needs
- Focusing primarily on mobility accessibility needs – but Council motion is not particularly clear
- Staff are not the experts – would be great if there was a standardized way to approach these applications
- One of many that will come forward concerning adaptable/ accessible units
- This is how to deal with these applications in the interim of Jenna’s policy etc.

Sandra

- Agree these matters should be brought to people who have the lived experience
- Quite angry reading about Dockside Green how there was something there for “everyone”
  - Had approached Mayor about being on a list to be transferred (with family)
  - Developer – front door wasn’t accessible but could be managed through back it turned out that no it wasn’t.
  - Been on the waitlist for a couple of years
  - No way to get on to or off of porch – step up on to patio steps leading up
- New Pacifica building
  - So compact
  - No way to turn into a bedroom

- No actual accessibility/ adaptability design elements
- Who is naming/ claiming that these are accessible?

Charlotte

- With this application have a clear adaptability definition (cannot comment on previous applications and how these were determined)

Nate

- If we are talking about units from 2012-2014 that worked well for me
- What works well for me doesn't necessarily work well for Sandra
- Need to empathize – think of the standard electric wheelchair/ manual chair/ scooter/ visually impaired person needs
- At bare minimum needs to fit mobility devices
- Who ever is in that chair can make those changes themselves
- If we make them accessible think of the diversity of needs
- External access and maneuver around

Sandra

- Think about how long differently abled people live in homes / housing vs. able bodied and whether that should be considered
- Access to green spaces
- Issues with places being carpeted – scooters and motorized wheelchair
- Think of what is being brought in from outside on tires into suites when mobility vehicles are muddy it becomes a health hazard to tenants
- Nowhere in entrance of apartment to put wheelchairs – not enough storage space
- Only one bathroom for family of 5
- More family sized units would be good
- Consider accessibility in emergency planning for building evacuation ie: earthquake and fire
- Generally the buildings aren't made very well – doors to building are so weak – importance of quality of construction
- Lack of green spaces downtown – playground is very small great for 5 and under – right near parking lot
  - Terrain under is lumpy and not accessible and right by the garbage and compost bin.
- Consideration of safety for all but worse for vulnerable people such as people with disabilities.

Nate

- Apartment was supposedly renovated before moving in – toilet paper holder and other things in bathroom and other places would break

- Need to be accessible as a standard, not on a case-by-case basis
  - Minimum standard that includes all disabilities
  - Needs to be more dynamic
- Need to feel sure that things won't break
- Not able bodied- small margin of error
- More possibility for falling or injury if something breaks or is designed badly a fall to a person with a disability is far worse then for an able bodied person.
- Bodies person.
- Everyone needs a certain liveability standard – especially important if you have a disability
- Issues that become very complicated because units don't extend to their needs
- Standards should be included in building code and any plan – base of accessibility
- Modifications need to be possible to happen safely with standard of repair and longevity
- Safety and security considerations
- Deserve a safe place to call home
- Think of the range of disabilities that people may have – no standard wheelchair user etc.
- Reiterate Sandra's point: Getting out of the building/ unit in case of fire – life and death situation
- How can we get away from standard misconceptions of disability

Regarding the different abilities or varied types of disabilities such mental health issues. Green space where people are able to gather with other tenants and not feel so alone.

Sandra

- Baseboards backing up –have created large holes in walls. baseboards could be higher.
- Make cupboard shelves that slide out. Better to have shallow shelves on wall to be able to reach everything or in them. Having shelves that are verticals and slide out from bottom shelves.
- Keep as much storage away from floor level.
- Have remote control for building doors. (Huge)
- Shower heads on height adjustment poles.
- NO bathtubs with rounded edges. (Very unstable for bath benches and bar grips)
- Sinks taps on sides of sink instead of at back. Try to have no counter space in front of sink.