

5.1 Development Permit with Variance Application No. 000207 for 722 and 726 Discovery Street

The City is considering a proposal for an eight-storey, multi-unit residential building consisting of approximately 90 dwelling units of supportive housing and requires a Rezoning Application.

Applicant meeting attendees:

Mark Griffith	S2 Architecture
Chad Zyla	S2 Architecture
Michael Defina	S2 Architecture
Michael Holm	S2 Architecture
Sean Rorison	BC Housing

Leanne Taylor provided the Panel with a brief introduction of the Application and the areas that Council is seeking advice on, including the following:

- building fenestration
- blank wall on north elevation
- termination of building
- building setbacks
- any other aspects of the proposal on which the ADP chooses to comment.

Sean Rorison and Michael Defina provided the Panel with a detailed presentation of the site and context of the proposal and details of the proposed landscape plan.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- Can you speak to the design rationale, placement of the building on site and why you chose to have the amenity space away from the public?
 - Building position and massing were decided by a few factors. Mainly being that the property is on a steep slope from east to west, as well as the fact we are using a modular construction steel to build. We wanted to make sure we were above grade enough so that we weren't causing any issues when it came to building the structure and any water damage below. There was a requirement from BC housing for a specific number of units. It made the most sense to place the building on the east side because of approachability. We wanted to take into consideration saving the trees and needed items like garbage and recycling close to the street. We looked at entry off the street but because of the slope we would need many stairs, this placement alleviates that.
- Have you considered rotating the building and different placements?
 - There is existing powerlines and we needed to find a way to safely erect a modular building so this needs to run linear to the site.
- Has there been thought to future developments in the area and what the OCP calls for on these lots with blank monotonous walls and how they may be covered?
 - In order to achieve the goals of BC Housing we ended up with a linear building with depth. In response to the depth, we are responding to building code requirements which limit glazing.

- Does this project meet the rapid deployment of affordable housing?
 - No, it does not comply because the current zoning is industrial. In order to comply it needs to be a zone that already permits multiple dwellings, and this zone does not.
- Is the design intended to be driven primarily by the neighbourhood context or by the prefab nature?
 - We understand we are working with a modular manufacturer; we believe it responds to the community and future developments we are seeing to the south.
- Does this have to be a modular building is that a requirement?
 - The majority of our housing with support buildings are done as modular and we intend to do a modular construction on this project and make sure it's a good fit for the building.
- How do the residents use the available outdoor space at the current hotel sites, and have they been asked what they would personally like?
 - There isn't a lot of useable at the City Centre hotel. They is only a large parking lot. There is a pool that should be filled in. We do a lot of gardening I the limited outdoor amenity spaces.
- Did you consider expressing the modular nature of the structure in the façade?
 - We looked at different options on how to articulate the façade but have limitations with building code. We thought the better approach was to wrap the building to break up the wood tones.
- Did you consider changing the massing in the areas where you are using different materials?
 - When we get above the first floor which is community space, the studio units stack regularly from front to back and are identical. We have looked at creating larger units, but this creates issues with residents. BC Housing has minimum requirements for units. The units are currently at their maximum floor space.
- Did you look at layouts that would save any of the Gary Oaks on Discovery Street?
 - Yes, but based on the size and making sure the module sizes and requirements from BC Housing were met we had to keep it as it.
- Do you feel like there could be room for additional planters?
 - We could expand some garden planters if required but the space is tight. We want to keep it comfortable and relaxing.
- Is the generated sunken down?
 - Yes correct, to try and eliminate noise.
- Were there other locations you could have placed the generator?
 - It could have been in the front yard and then it would have been visible to the public and not as quiet.
- In your letter you expressed “a playful approach to glazing and rooflines.” Can you explain why you think the roofline is playful and speak to the windows?
 - The windows are standard product used by BC Housing in their supportive housing projects. We tried to step the rooflines in different areas, each material has its own height. We have also lowered the glazing so the spandrel panel that sits at the top of the glazing up the elevator. We wanted to play with elevations as opposed to trying to decorate the roof considering the height.

- Is there a reason the garbage and recycling weren't encapsulated in some type of enclosure?
 - Typically, we don't cover them with a roof, but we wanted to keep it near the bike enclosure. The entrance for the bike enclosure is higher up from where the garbage enclosure doors open. The three main reasons we were limited were the height, access to the waste and recycling didn't let up landscape and the transformer for BC Hydro needed to be close to the street which is why we were led to this scenario.
- Is there a reason the pedestrian ramp is so far north?
 - The main reason is the alignment to the walkway where the garbage and recycling is. If we are doing loading here or if there's anyone with accessible needs, we needed a space because the slope of the drive aisle from east to West is very steep. So, we needed a curb ramp here, which pushed the ramp further north.
- What level of step code is this targeting?
 - Level 3.
- Is there a reason you are not targeting a higher step code?
 - Purely cost.

Panel members discussed:

- Don't like this proposal as it would never be presented as any type of market housing.
- Will not be in support of this proposal.
- Missed opportunity with this modular building and different options.
- Unimpressed with the exterior.
- Appreciate the work that goes into these housing projects and sympathise with BC Housing.
- No concerns with setbacks.
- Understand why the exterior looks simple.
- Don't agree that modular construction is needed.
- Would appreciate more thought into landscape plans.
- Would like to see further consideration to the circulation of amenity space and landscape.
- In the desire to house the people that need it, do all our standards need to be set aside?
- More thought, love and creativity needs to go into these programs and projects, it isn't a question of money.
- Nonmarket projects should not be able to be picked out within our City.
- Are we just trying to stack people or are we creating home?.
- This is not the only way we can do modular buildings, they need to have a sense of neighbourhood and community.
- Reminiscent of the public housing project in the USA.
- Don't want to stigmatize nonmarket housing.
- Being in these small boxes is better than living on the streets but we can do better.

Motion:

It was moved by Peter Johannknecht, seconded by David Berry that the Advisory Design Panel reopen the question period to ask the applicant if they are willing to take the necessary measures suggested by the ADP to improve this project.

Carried Unanimously

- Are the applicants willing to make the necessary changes discussed thus far by the ADP?
 - Yes, we want to make this building something everyone is proud of. The one constraint we do have is that we want to deliver 90 units of supportive housing onto this property.

Motion:

It was moved by Will King, seconded by Peter Johannknecht that the Advisory Design Panel supports housing of this nature and scale with the number of units in this location and for this purpose recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000207 for 722 and 726 Discovery Street does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined (and that the key areas that should be revised include:

- design of building and entry should be welcoming and offer a sense of home
- building should not read as nonmarket housing
- changing window formats and scale to read more residential instead of institutional
- increase bike parking
- consider preserving the Gary Oak trees along Discovery Street
- matching the exterior program to the needs of the future residents
- recycling enclosure concealed and covered
- further consideration of the termination of the building
- explore opportunities to enhance building performance

Carried Unanimously