

STAFF DESIGN COMMENT

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT NO. DP001154 – 475 STEWART AVENUE

Applicant/Architect: RAYMOND DEBEELD ARCHITECT INC.

Owner: RHIZOMA VENTURES INC.

Landscape Architect: KATE STEFIUK STUDIO

Subject Property:

<i>Zoning</i>	R8 – Medium Density Residential
<i>Location</i>	The subject property is located on the west side of Stewart Avenue, between Townsite Road and Rosehill Street.
<i>Total Area</i>	809.7m ²
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plans – Corridor; Map 3 – Development Permit Area No. 9 - Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential Development.
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; and Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines

Site Context

The subject property is located in the Newcastle Neighbourhood and currently contains a single residential dwelling. The lot slopes uphill from east to west, away from Stewart Avenue.

The properties to the north, west, and south are also zoned R8 – Medium Density Residential and contain established single residential dwellings. There is a three-storey multi-family residential building across Stewart Avenue to the east.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The applicant is proposing a four-storey multi-family building with 6 residential units in a townhouse form. All units will be facing a private driveway and two-car garages are provided in each unit. The proposed gross floor area is 916m² and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is equal to 1.13, within the maximum allowable FAR of 1.25 in the R8 zone.

Site Design

The proposed site design concentrates development toward the south side of the property with a shared driveway to provide vehicular access from Stewart Avenue running along the north of the property. The building has been located closer to the south property line to preserve sunlight for the neighbouring property to the north. Each unit will have a private garage with access from the driveway. While the required number of parking spaces, long-term bicycle parking, and short-term bicycle parking are provided, variances are requested to reduce the accessible and visitor

parking requirements from 1 to 0 and to increase the maximum permitted amount of small car parking stalls from 40% to 54%.

Pedestrian access to the site will be from the southeast corner of the lot, with an entrance walkway to the south of the building providing access to each unit. An accessible walkway also provides access at this point, bypassing the stairs on the primary walkway.

Staff Comments:

- Look at opportunities to provide a visitor parking space on the site.
- Strengthen the pedestrian entrance to the building to ensure it is well emphasized and easy to locate for visitors. One option could be to frame the entrance with a gate mimicking the front façade.

Building Design

The proposed building will consist of six 3-bedroom units. The units will contain a garage and entrance foyer on the ground floors, living space and a kitchen on the second floors, two bedrooms on the third floors, and a master bedroom and patio on the fourth floors. The units have also been designed to accommodate a future elevator where needed.

The building design utilizes the slope of the property and each unit rises one foot higher than the previous unit, mimicking the site's natural topography. With a natural slope uphill to the west, only three floors will be visible from the property to the west. All units will feature views towards the northeast from the private patios.

The front façade of the building facing Stewart Avenue features a unique design with disproportionately-sized windows that draw significant visual attention. The upper floor will be offset to break up the front façade. On the north elevation, each unit will have its balconies framed by a two-storey frame to help distinguish the units and provide interesting rhythm along with the uphill stepping. The south elevation will feature balconies on the second floor.

The primary building material on the east (front) elevation will be smooth HardiePanel, while the upper floor will be HardiePlank cedar siding. The west (rear) elevation will be largely smooth HardiePanel, the north and south (side) elevations are largely HardiePlank cedar siding, and the base of all elevations will feature HardieShingle siding to break up the verticality of the structure.

Staff Comments:

- Significant articulation provides visual interest on the west, north, and east elevations. The four storey massing is quite significant on the south elevation, especially with the side yard setback variance requested on this side. Consider measures to break up the massing on the south elevation where the building faces the adjacent property.
- Explore providing more substantial privacy screens between balconies on the south elevation; and, consider ways to mitigate the impacts of proximity of these balconies to the neighbouring property.

Landscape Design

The proposed landscape design features a large landscaped boulevard to the front of building with a rain garden and public art feature. An accessible ramp will cross through the front garden area. The rear of the property will contain a communal outdoor amenity space with a grass lawn. A retaining wall is proposed to raise the lawn in the rear above finished grade so that the common green space is at the same elevation as the 2nd floor of this development and meeting natural grade of the adjacent property. Each unit will feature a small outdoor planter area on the 4th floor patios.

Staff Comments:

- Provide details regarding the entry gates to the site, including both walkway gates and the driveway gates. Transparency is needed to reduce the gated feel of the development.
- While the units will be accessible for those with limited mobility, the common green space is only accessed by stairs. Consider opportunities to provide better accessibility to the outdoor amenity space.
- Update the Landscape Plan to match the Site Plan and show the locations of refuse receptacles and associated landscape screening.

PROPOSED VARIANCES

Minimum Building Setbacks

The minimum rear yard setback is 10.5m. The rear yard setback is 5.35m, a proposed variance of 5.15m.

The minimum side yard setback is 3m. The south side yard setback is 1.91m, a proposed variance of 1.09m.

Lot Coverage

The maximum lot coverage is 40%. The lot coverage is 48%, a proposed variance of 8%. Lot coverage includes overhangs from covered decks and cantilevers. The proposed building footprint alone is equal to 40%.

Parking

The maximum permitted amount of small car parking stalls is 40% of the required parking. The amount of small car parking stalls is 54%, a proposed variance of 14%.

The minimum amount of visitor parking is 1 visitor parking stall. No visitor parking is proposed, a variance of 1 visitor parking stall.

The minimum amount of accessible parking is 1 accessible parking stall. There are no accessible parking stalls proposed, a variance of 1 accessible parking stall. The garage spaces do not meet the minimum size requirements to be considered accessible parking stalls, but they may still provide opportunities for residents with limited mobility to park and access the elevator.