

DATE OF MEETING | February 1, 2021 |

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**SUBJECT | DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION NO. DP1154 –
475 STEWART AVENUE |**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present for Council's consideration a development permit application for a four-storey multi-family residential building with six dwelling units. |

Recommendation

That Council issue Development Permit No. DP1154 at 475 Stewart Avenue with the following variances:

- increase the maximum lot coverage from 40% to 44%;
- reduce the minimum rear yard setback from 10.5m to 5.3m;
- reduce the minimum south side yard setback from 3.0m to 1.2m; and
- increase the maximum allowable combined height of a fence and retaining wall in the north side and rear yard from 2.4m to 3.6m. |

BACKGROUND

A development permit application, DP1154, was received from Raymond De Beeld Architect Inc, on behalf of Rhizoma Ventures Inc., in order to permit a new multi-family infill development at 475 Stewart Avenue.

Subject Property and Site Context

<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>	810m ²
<i>Official Community Plan (OCP)</i>	Map 1 – Future Land Use Plans – Corridor Map 3 – Development Permit Area – DPA No. 9 – Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, Multiple Family and Mixed Commercial/Residential Development.
<i>Neighbourhood Plan</i>	Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan – Mixed Use Corridor
<i>Relevant Design Guidelines</i>	General Development Permit Area Design Guidelines; Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines

The subject property is an existing undersized multi-family-zoned lot in the Newcastle Neighbourhood and currently contains a single residential dwelling. The lot slopes downhill by approximately 4m from west to east.

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. The subject property is within walking distance of commercial services and amenities along Terminal Avenue and further north on Stewart Avenue, and is also close to the Waterfront Walkway.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing a four-storey multi-family building with six residential units in a townhouse form. The proposed gross floor area is 923m² and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is equal to 1.14, below 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 on the north side of the property. Each unit will have a two-car garage with access from the driveway. The required number of parking spaces, long-term bicycle parking, and short-term bicycle parking are provided. A visitor parking space will also be provided adjacent to the driveway.

Pedestrian access to the site will be from Stewart Avenue, with an entrance walkway to each unit on the side south side of the building. The 1.2m-wide walkway will be framed by a portal structure with transparent gating. The entrance walkway will be lit by recessed wall lighting and the common green space will include low bollard lighting.

Refuse receptacles will be stored within individual garages and will be brought to a designated pick-up area on collection days.

Building Design

The proposed building will consist of six three-bedroom units. The units are configured to be accommodated within a functional building envelope on the undersized parcel. Each unit will contain a garage and entrance foyer on the ground floor, living space and a kitchen on the second floor, two bedrooms on the third floor, and a master bedroom and patio on the fourth floor. 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 steps 1m higher than the previous unit, mimicking the site's natural topography. With a natural slope uphill to the west, only three storeys will be visible above grade from the property to the west. All units will feature private patios facing south. Following feedback received from neighbours, the applicant revised the design and interior layout of the building to minimize overlook into the rear yards of adjacent properties.

The front façade of the building facing Stewart Avenue features a unique design with windows of varying size to create visual interest. The upper floor will be offset to break up the front façade. On the north elevation, balconies are framed by a two-storey projection to distinguish each unit and provide an interesting rhythm along with the uphill slope. The south elevation will feature patios adjacent to each unit's front door.

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

Landscape Design

The proposed landscape design features a large landscaped boulevard to the front of building with a rain garden and 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 lawn, to be enclosed by a cedar panel fence. 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 second floor of the development and meets the grade of the adjacent property to the west. A shared storage room is proposed to be built into the retaining wall. Each unit will feature a small outdoor planter area on the fourth floor patios.

Since the original application, the applicant has made design alterations along the walkway on the south side of the building in an effort to accommodate and retain existing significant trees and a large hedge on the adjacent property to the south.

Design Advisory Panel

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), at its meeting held on 2019-SEP-26, accepted DP1154 as presented and provided the following recommendations:

- Look at ways to individualize each unit entrance for wayfinding purposes;
- Consider ways to strengthen the pedestrian entrance to the building to ensure it is well identified and easy to locate for visitors; and
- Review the Neighbourhood Plan and confirm the project meets its guidelines in principle.

The applicant subsequently revised the development plans to address the DAP recommendations by including individual elevated entries for each unit on the south elevation and by framing the pedestrian entrance to the building with a highly visible street-facing portal. A number of revisions were made to address the Newcastle + Brechin Neighbourhood Plan Urban Design Framework and Guidelines (NBNP Guidelines) as summarized below:

- The fourth floor patios were switched from the north side to the south side of the building to minimize overlook onto neighbouring rear yards. In doing so, the massing on the south elevation was softened with the uppermost floor recessed further from the lot line. This change is consistent with the NBNP Guidelines, which recommend buildings be set back above the third floor in proximity to neighbouring lot lines.

- An interior spatial reconfiguration reduced the amount of glazing on the north elevation to better respect the privacy of neighbours.
- The roof overhang on the north elevation was reduced to minimize the building's perceived massing.

In addition to the above-noted revisions, the applicant undertook a schematic analysis to review the feasibility of orienting individual unit entrances towards Stewart Avenue. Given the width of the lot and layout of units, the analysis determined that it was not feasible while still providing a single driveway access from Stewart Avenue. In lieu of street-oriented units, the applicant is proposing a significant landscaped area in the front yard with a unique building façade and street-facing art to provide visual interest at the pedestrian level.

Proposed Variances

Maximum Lot Coverage

The maximum lot coverage in the R8 zone is 40%. The proposed lot coverage is 44%; a requested variance of 4% (31m²).

The calculation of lot coverage includes the area of the partially underground garages and the building cantilevers, such as covered decks and overhangs. The proposed building footprint alone is equal to 40%. The subject property's lot size of 810m² is less than the minimum lot size of 1,800m² for new lots created under the R8 zone. The building density will not exceed the maximum permitted FAR in the R8 zone, and the increased lot coverage will accommodate the proposed under-building parking.

Minimum Rear Yard Setback

The minimum rear yard setback in the R8 zone is 10.5m. The proposed rear yard setback is 5.3m; a requested variance of 5.2m.

The proposed building is oriented to align with a full-width driveway along the north property line. By providing a 6.7m north side yard setback, greater than the minimum 3m side yard setback, the applicant is requesting to vary the rear yard setback to provide a feasible building envelope on the constrained site. The visual impact of the building will be reduced as it presents a three-storey façade above grade on the rear (west) elevation.

Minimum Side Yard Setback

The minimum side yard setback in the R8 zone is 3m. The proposed south side yard setback for a portion of the parking level is 1.2m; a requested variance of 1.8m.

The 1.2m setback is requested only for the partially underground garages adjacent to the pedestrian walkway on the south elevation. The variance is requested in order to accommodate two full-size vehicles in tandem in each garage, as well as the required 6.7m-wide drive aisle on the north side of the building. Above the garage level, the remainder of the first three levels on the south elevation will comply with the minimum required 3m setback, and the uppermost level will have a setback of 5m.

Maximum Fence Height

The maximum allowable combined fence and retaining wall height in a side or rear yard in the R8 zone is 2.4m. A proposed fence and retaining wall will have a combined a height of 3.6m; a requested variance of 1.2m.

In order to create a functional outdoor amenity space in the rear at the same grade as the neighbouring properties, a 2.4m-high retaining wall is proposed within the north side yard and rear yard. The retaining wall will face the internal driveway, which is lower than surrounding properties, and the wall is not expected to be visible from outside the subject property. A 1.2m-high cedar board fence is proposed on top of the concrete retaining wall for safety and privacy of neighbours.

The development complies with all other zoning regulation, including permitted building height and density. Staff support the proposed variances, which will enable a ground-oriented infill development in close proximity to existing services and with consideration to the NBNP Guidelines and building design objectives.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Development Permit Application No. DP1154 is for a four-storey multi-family infill development with six residential units in a townhouse form.
- Variances are requested to increase the maximum lot coverage from 40% to 44%, to reduce the minimum rear yard setback from 10.5m to 5.3m, to reduce the minimum side yard setback for a portion of the parking level from 3m to 1.2m, and to increase the maximum allowable combined fence and retaining wall height in the north side and rear yard from 2.4m to 3.6m.
- Staff support the proposed variances.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Permit Terms and Conditions
ATTACHMENT B: Context Map
ATTACHMENT C: Location Plan
ATTACHMENT D: Site Plan
ATTACHMENT E: Building Elevations
ATTACHMENT F: Building Renderings
ATTACHMENT G: Building Sections
ATTACHMENT H: Retaining Wall Sections
ATTACHMENT I: Shadow Study
ATTACHMENT J: Landscape Plan and Details
ATTACHMENT K: Aerial Photo

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