

Stephane Laroye Architect Inc.

215 – 35 West 5th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1H4
O: 604-558-6955

3 August 2021

Melissa Nitz
Planner 1
Planning and Development
1100 Patricia Blvd
Prince George, BC V2L 3V9

Re: Development Permit No. DP1787 – 4500 Ospika Blvd.

Dear Melissa,

See below the Variance Rationale text that forms part of the development permit architectural drawing set (as seen on page A0.00-Coversheet).

Variance Rationale**1. Building Height**

We request a variance to permit a 5-storey building within the permitted height of 15m.

The RM5 Zoning sets both a height limit of 15m and the maximum number of floors to 4-stories. As part of this variance application, we are requesting the City to allow us the opportunity to densify our footprint and add a 5th story to a section of our building. The site is significantly impacted by the sloped topography and we propose to locate the building massing along the crest of the ridge and away from the residential neighbours to the east. This allow us to take advantage of the unique site conditions and lower our total building height, while protecting some of the natural surroundings and environmental areas. To further minimize the impact on the site the project footprint is kept as small as possible and locates some of the floor space on a 5th storey. Additionally, the change in number of storeys allows the massing to be broken into smaller volumes making the building more visually compelling. As a whole, the unique site conditions allow us to introduce the 5th story without exceeding the permitted height of 15m while minimizing our impact on site and the surrounding areas.

2. Parking

We request a variance to permit a parking reduction from 1 stall per studio unit + 1 visitor stall per 7 studio units to 1 stall per 1.32 studio units + 1 visitor stall per 10 studio units.

The project is a student residence and not a multi-family condominium project. The Micro Unit Design targets students seeking efficient and environmentally sustainable living options with a significant number of them not expected to own their own vehicle. Therefore, the students are relying less on private vehicles to ensure they reduce their environmental footprint and more on existing public systems and emerging private ride options, walking or biking.

Recently built student housing projects that we have reviewed have provided as much as 1 stall per 4 units to no parking for students. They include: Prince George; Kelowna; UBC; University of Alberta and others. We have also seen compelling evidence from across the country to suggest that students are ditching the car in favour of public transit. For example, The City of Regina has recorded a 225% increase in Post Secondary ridership on their bus network in the last 4 years. Regina continues to add buses to the main student routes and they continue to fill up. Additional rational and trends in other jurisdictions may be found in the attached report from Bunt and Associates specifically written in support of this project.

New generational choices, including emerging options provided by private sector innovation, continues to provide additional options for students to lessen their dependence on vehicles. Student housing models focused on sustainable options provide less and less parking. As rent models evolve and typically include expensive and limited parking, students look at other options to reduce their cost.

This project tries to align with Canada's Federal Government's vision of a carbon neutral economy and the growing trend of lowering human's carbon footprint. The HUB Residence business model promotes sustainability and environmental responsibility in all aspects of the design and our operating model considers our total environmental impact. As for parking, the on-site parking provided will not be a free amenity and will require payment for use. This will limit vehicles as not all students will pay, or even want, parking. Further to the cost impact, parking will only be available on a first come first serve basis. Once the available parking is filled, rental options will change to "No Parking" and a student with a personal vehicle will likely not rent from the property.

For those students who do not have a private vehicle, the site has easy access to public transit, bike paths as well as walking trails. We anticipate that less vehicles will have to be accommodated in the summer months as students will use the less expensive options during those periods. Winter months will see an increase in need for vehicle transport. This will move students without vehicles to public transit and other ride share or carpool services.

Please do not hesitate to call if you wish to review this letter in detail 604-558-6955

Respectfully,

Stephane Laroye Architect Inc.

Per:



Stephane Laroye Architect AIBC MRAIC MCIP RPP LEED AP SPECA
Principal

