

October 5, 2020

**VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

City of Prince George  
1100 Patricia Blvd.  
Prince George, V2M 7G2

**RE: Additional Information for Council Consideration VP100562 & DP100725**

Dear Mayor Hall and Members of Council,

The purpose of this letter is to provide Mayor and Council with additional information about the variance and development permit application (VP100562 & DP100725) that will facilitate the development of Phase 1 of the Aboriginal Housing Society Prince George's master planned development. This letter outlines key design principles and responds to concerns raised by the City's Planning Department regarding the design of the proposed development. For additional details about the design, please refer to the Design Rationale in the Supporting Documents on the Council Agenda.

The master plan includes 4 separate phases that include housing, gathering spaces, areas for cultural practice, and health services. Phase 1 of the development includes 50 affordable townhomes for families. The development is being funded by BC Housing and therefore meets the BC Housing Design Guidelines. Our strategy for development of the site seeks to establish an urban Indigenous village that provides safe and affordable, generational housing for Indigenous people throughout the north who move to Prince George for education, work, or other opportunities.

This year represents the third consecutive year of engaged, participatory design workshops that have been hosted by a professional architecture and planning team. The proposed designs are a direct reflection of the engagement process findings in the context of construction and funding requirements.

The design team includes Kelly Edzerza-Bapty (AIBC and Principal of Obsidian Architecture) and David Simpson (AIBC and Founding Partner of DYS Architecture). Kelly is the only female architect from a B.C. First Nation currently practicing in the province. Kelly plays a leadership role designing and delivering engagement processes and ensuring that the designs reflect the engagement processes and Indigenous values.

The City of Prince George Planning Department has expressed concern with specific design elements of the site, including *"lack of colour and varying materials, window-building ratio, and otherwise flat façade on buildings that are expansive (i.e. range of 5-10 units per building block)"*.

The AHSPG plans to integrate Indigenous artwork in each building and the grey colour will serve as a canvas to make those art pieces stand out and highlight each of the five buildings as distinct spaces. The design incorporates colourful, vertical glass elements that symbolize the northern lights and represent a night sky that reflects all indigenous people.



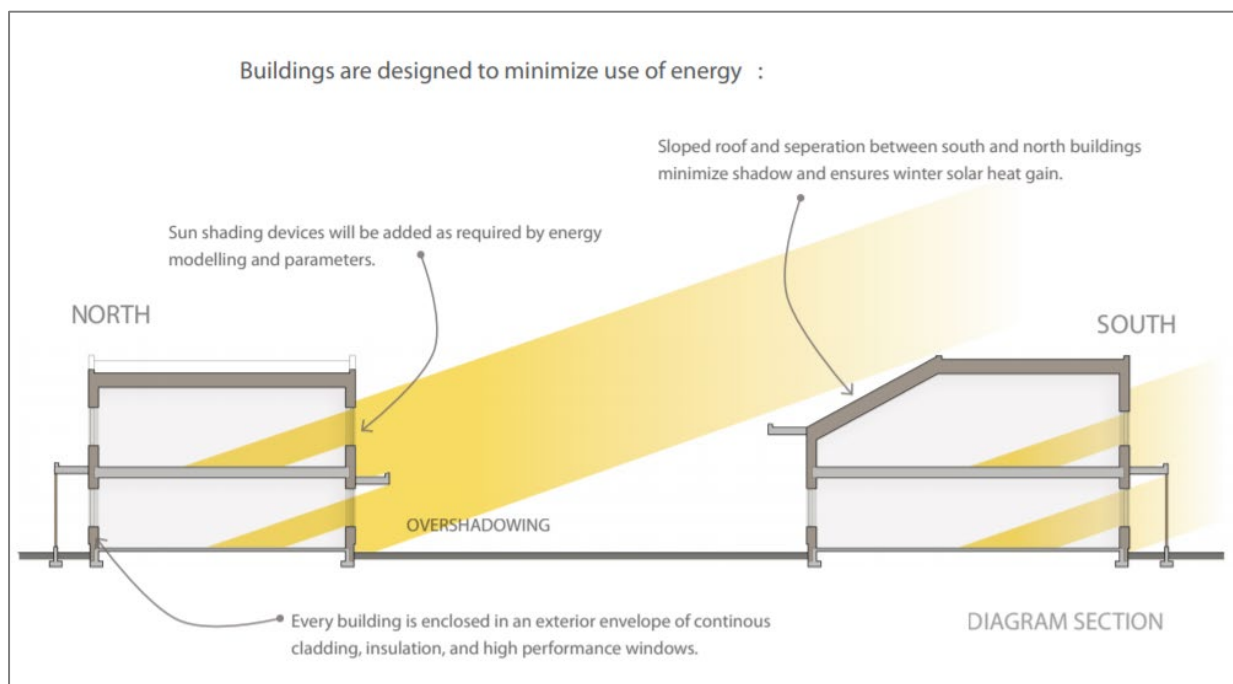


The development incorporates the following varying materials:

- Wood panels and structures that reflect the historical use of wood in Indigenous culture and reflect the identity of Prince George.
- Timber elements along the base of the buildings provide a connection to the land in the way trees are rooted to the land;
- Variations in cladding, including hardiplank siding and metal cladding for durability; and
- Colourful glass accents that symbolize the northern lights; and
- Artwork at entrances of each building.

The window-building ratio and flat façade reflects a building that has been designed to meet the principles of energy conservation through passive design. Energy efficiency is an important principle for both BC Housing funding requirements and ongoing operational considerations. The buildings have been modelled to meet Step 3 of the BC energy code. The south and west orientation of the buildings will maximize the exposure to the sun for winter solar gain. The flat design of the façade maximizes the efficiency of the exterior envelope.

The sloped roofline on buildings 1 and 2 adds visual interest and allows for solar exposure of neighbouring buildings 3 and 4 to the north. The south and north façades of all of the buildings have been enhanced by incorporating an awning with a varied roofline, colourful glass accents, and vertical wood screening to provide privacy between unit entrances.





We hope that this letter provides clarity regarding the proposed design. Phase 1 of the master plan will provide 50 affordable townhome units for Indigenous families. The need for this development cannot be under-stated. As of August 2020, the BC Housing waitlist for Prince George includes 449 applicants, including 149 seniors and 300 families. 43% of the applicants on BC Housing's waitlist are Indigenous. In addition, the AHSPG maintains a waitlist that currently includes 240 active applications (528 individuals) and approximately half (49%) of the households on the waitlist are families with children. This development represents a step towards meeting the significant need for affordable housing for Indigenous families, seniors, and Elders in Prince George.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director  
Aboriginal Housing Society Prince  
George

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