



To: Richmond City Council

Date: April 16, 2024

From: Cecilia Achiam
Acting Chair, Development Permit Panel

File: DP 22-013081

Re: **Development Permit Panel Meeting Held on March 27, 2024**

Staff Recommendation

That the recommendation of the Panel to authorize the issuance of Development Permit (DP 22-013081) for the properties at 8740, 8760, 8780 and 8800 Spires Road, be endorsed and the Permit so issued.

Cecilia Achiam
Acting Chair, Development Permit Panel
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Panel Report

The Development Permit Panel considered the following item at its meeting held on March 27, 2024.

DP 22-013081 – FORMWERKS ARCHITECTURE – 8740, 8760, 8780 AND
8800 SPIRES ROAD
(March 27, 2024)

The Panel considered a Development Permit (DP) application to permit the construction of 36 townhouse units and three secondary suites at 8740, 8760, 8780 and 8800 Spires Road on a site zoned "Parking Structure Townhouses (RTP4)".

The applicant, Norman Huth, of Formwerks Architecture, the applicant's landscape architect, Caelan Griffiths, of PMG Landscape Architects, provided a brief visual presentation highlighting:

- The 36 three-storey townhouses and three secondary suites are situated within five buildings, stacked above enclosed underground parking, with a four-storey massing maintained along Spires Road to conceal the parking structure and provide a more attractive streetscape.
- Massing is recessed at the upper levels to allow for more natural light into the courtyard and buildings adjacent to the side yards have been reduced on the upper levels to provide a gentler transition into existing single-family developments.
- Proposed are six garden level units at grade (primarily two bedroom units), along with 3-lock off units (ranging from 317 to 388 sq. ft.) and four accessible units (located in buildings two and three) as part of the 30 three-level townhouses (ranging from 1,200 to 1900 sq. ft.), each with individual unit access as well as access to the outdoor amenity space, on the courtyard level.
- Building two will have pedestrian lobby entry and access to the elevator and stairs that lead to the courtyard and indoor amenity space that spills out to the outdoor space.
- Each unit is provided with a minimum of one parking stall and have access to bicycle storage in the covered parkade.
- The architectural character of the development is very much in keeping with the neighbouring development to the west (referred to as Spires One) and initially seen as a continuation of Spires One as the next phase, but with a slightly more contemporary approach in terms of the materiality and colour choices, and much more monochromatic.
- The primary parking entry court is met with an inspirational bird house/play house structure that will be a dominant feature for the development.
- Material pallets include fibreglass shingles, painted fibre cement siding in varying profiles and varying colours, as well as an accent of entry door colour, and brick elements around the base of the buildings.
- Shadow analysis shows very minimal impact on the neighbourhood.
- The project has been designed to comply with the City's Basic Universal Housing (BUH) requirements.

- Similar to the neighbouring site, a number of trees have been retained, with the most important being two substantial evergreens at Cook Gate and Spires Road adjacent to the indoor amenity and which form the gate part of Cook Gate, a strong vertical element on that corner and works towards the main pedestrian entry to the west.
- Modest deciduous trees are proposed to be interspersed to draw the eye towards the pedestrian entry, and many of the units will be marked with a tree to enrich the pedestrian experience.
- Temporary bicycle parking in the shade of another retained tree (larger deciduous tree) will act as an anchor point, to be placed at the pedestrian entry, preserving some of the neighbourhood character from the landscape point of view, but also to mark a main entry.
- A little bit of screening function with the retained and bolstered landscape element between the pedestrian entry and the vehicle entry, to further develop the ecological function of the retained tree as well as placing bird houses on all four corners to embed more ecological function, and a little whimsy to play into the play house/bird house feature, with actual birdhouses.
- The vehicle entry is marked with special paving with concrete unit pavers to soften the otherwise fairly broad expansive of paving and enhance the street presence of the project.
- The back of the site will have substantial low broad leaf evergreens to create a green boundary, outside of eyesight, allowing for clear sightlines across the back of the site, where a connectivity pathway is also provided across both Spires sites, creating a loop (and future laneway) and bolstering the usability for both projects from a pedestrian point of view.
- Recognizing the close proximity of the school for older children to access more extravagant play equipment, the play area for the project is designed around preschool aged children, with climbing steps to an upper level that snakes around the staircase and bird house/play house structure, and an embedded slide and climbing feature for young children to climb their way up the slope, with robin egg blue hand holds that play with the children's imagination given the close proximity with the natural elements of the area.
- Appealing to the older children and young adults, an outdoor foosball table and proposed lighting will broaden the scope of the outdoor amenity.
- A small outdoor BBQ dining area, enclosed with green to present the notion of a ceiling for the possibility of string lighting across the top, is also proposed for the northeast corner.
- Bollard lighting and step lighting in key points will also be installed.

Staff noted (i) the project is intended to achieve Energy Level Step Code 3 with a low carbon energy system for heating and cooling, and (ii) a Servicing Agreement is required as part of this application for frontage works and site services.

In addition, Staff commended the applicant and design team for the retention of the trees along the frontage, the inclusion of the four single-storey accessible units as well as the three secondary suites involved in the overall project.

In reply to a queries from the Panel, Mr. Griffiths noted (i) there will be no lawns in direct association with the individual units and that the lawn at the corner under the retained trees will be maintained to avoid any undue disturbance to those trees, (ii) the materials for the exterior of the building are brick and cementitious siding and fibreglass shingles for the roof, (iii) there is no lighting in the soffits, but each entry door has a light fixture and an entry monument from a landscape perspective, with low level lighting, (iv) there is also at grade lighting along the south Statutory Right-of-Way (SRW) that runs east and west, as well as light fixtures along the building to illuminate the walkway all the way down the south perimeter to provide visibility at night.

In reply to a query from the Panel regarding protection of the offsite tree that is being retained and any provision to ensure the retention should that property owner redevelop in the future, Mr. Craig noted the tree is on the site to the south which is part of an existing application, and that the tree retention will be reviewed as part of that application. Staff further noted the long term intention is for a lane to run along the south side of that site, which may make the retention of that tree very difficult.

The Panel expressed support for the proposal, noting (i) the project is well designed and considered and matches with the existing context, and (ii) appreciation for the tree retention, extra parking beyond the minimum requirement and having both the accessible suites and the lock-off suites.

The Panel recommends the Permit be issued.