

New form of housing is no tin can

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Vancouver is set to be the first city in Canada to use stacked refurbished shipping containers for affordable housing. While the idea has been met with mixed reaction, city council has agreed after a lengthy study that it makes sense. The 12-unit project to be located in the city's eastside was to be approved Tuesday.

"It's the first of its kind in Canada but definitely not the first in the world," Janice Abbott, executive director of the Atira Women's Resource Society, told the *Star*. "We work with a lot of women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness."

Atira decided the containers — which are 40-foot long and 8-foot wide — seemed a perfect option for a small plot of land it owns in the east end in a city considered to be one of Canada's most expensive. The three-storey project, complete with balconies, received a start-up grant of \$92,000 from the city, plus \$90,000 from B.C. Hydro.

Plans call for six of the 12 units to be rented at the welfare rental subsidy rate of \$375 per month, while the others will be classified as affordable units but not available to those on social assistance.

The cost of turning a container into 320 sq. ft. of livable space, complete with washroom, laundry facilities, doors, windows, insulation, wallboard and flooring is about \$85,000, compared to about \$270,000 in a traditional highrise.

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