

By email to:

Gary Pemberton gpemberton@victoria.ca

7 February 2018

Dear Gary Pemberton:

Re: Community Meeting for 1249 Finlayson Avenue

I'm sending this to you as there is no information on the City website about where to send community meeting correspondence; I trust you will be able to forward it to the appropriate persons.

COMMUNITY MEETING DETAILS

Date: 28 January 2018

Location of Meeting: Quadra Village Community Centre, 901 Kings Avenue

Meeting facilitated by: Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee (NAC)

Approximate number of people in attendance: 16 community members; 3 members of NAC Executive

Meeting Chair: Jenny Fraser

Note Taker: Vincent Gornall

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

Evan Peterson, on behalf of the property owner, Adrian Langereis, made a comprehensive package of handouts available, gave a short presentation about the proposal, and answered questions.

The proponent is seeking to rezone the property from R1B to two R1S2 restricted small lots. The existing single family dwelling on the property would be retained, turned 90 degrees to face Finlayson Street, and refurbished. A new single family dwelling would be constructed to the south of the existing house and facing onto Highview Street.

Mr. Peterson stated that while the owner's stated intent is to rent both these homes, he may in future need to sell one.

The proponent is seeking variances on each of the new small lots:

- On lot A (the existing house), a reduction from 6 metres to 4.2 metres on the south side of the building; and
- On Lot B (the new house) reductions from 6 metres to 3.5 metres on the west (front) and 3.4 on the east (rear).

Both homes would conform to lot coverage, size, and height restrictions. The existing one-storey house would be raised to accommodate a full height basement. The new house would be two storeys above a full height basement. Each lot would provide off-street parking for two vehicles, either in a garage or in a driveway.

Mr. Peterson noted that the proposal is consistent with numerous infill housing and small lot rezoning projects. The design is compatible with the neighbouring streetscape, the scale of homes and lot sizes. It minimizes shadowing and maximizes privacy between the two houses and with immediately adjacent homes.

Rotation of the existing house will require removal of a mature Garry oak; this has been inspected by an arborist and allegedly shows signs of decline. The landscape plan for the site includes its replacement with two young Garry oaks along Highview Street.

The site plan also includes construction of a sidewalk on Highview Street along the front of both of the new lots, and the establishment of bicycle parking spots. Four of the six existing on-street parking spaces on Highview would be eliminated.

DISCUSSION

Overall reaction

Participants in the community meeting indicated that they liked the plan to retain and refurbish the existing 'nice old house' on the property. The topics of greatest interest to meeting participants were the potential loss of on-street parking along Highview Street, and the number of proposed units of housing.

On-Street Parking

The majority of meeting participants indicated they were not in favour of the elimination of the existing street parking along Highview. They noted that there is already limited street parking in the area, in particular along Finlayson, and that the parking spaces along Highview are heavily used. Two meeting participants, however, indicated that they were in favour of constructing a sidewalk. There was general consensus that the bicycle parking was not likely to be used by residents. Mr. Peterson indicated that the sidewalk and bicycle parking were included in the plan at the request of City staff.

Number of Units

Mr. Peterson indicated that the proposal is consistent with the small lot zoning which allows for only living unit on each lot. While some meeting participants expressed support for a single unit on each lot, approximately half of the meeting participants indicated that, as suites are an important component of affordable housing, they might support the creation of more dwelling units on the property.

Several meeting participants expressed a personal conviction that conversion of the proposed single family homes to suites would occur in future. They indicated that, given their belief that this would occur, they would prefer that the proponent seek permission now to build legal suites. They also expressed the opinion that the creation of suites would necessitate four to six off-street parking spaces and that the small lots would not be large enough to accommodate this.

One participant suggested that, as an alternative to the creation of two single family dwellings, the existing house could be lifted and converted to two strata or two rental units. This would create two units without the loss of the Garry oak.

Mr. Peterson indicated several times that none of the options described above were currently being proposed.

Landscaping

Some meeting participants expressed concern that the proposal requires the loss of a mature Garry oak, and requested that the tree be examined by a second arborist. Some participants also expressed concern about potential construction damage to the roots of the mature conifers growing along the property line between 1249 and 1309 Finlayson. They pointed out that in particular the conifers along the eastern side of Lot B would be only 3.4 metres from the new house.

Design

Participants expressed differing views on the proposal design. Some suggested that the proposed homes were a good fit with the neighborhood aesthetic, or even an improvement. One praised the set back of the garage and the positioning of the front door closer to the street. Others suggested the new house reflects a 'cookie cutter' design and does not match existing homes on the street.

Energy Efficiency

One meeting participant noted that the south sides of both homes had few windows and/or small windows, and asked whether the proponent had considered passive heating, solar panels, and other energy efficiency features. Mr. Peterson indicated that the design priority was to maximize privacy between the houses, rather than

energy efficiency. Furthermore, as the intent is to provide affordable rental the construction budget does not include installation of alternative energy technologies. Another meeting participant asked whether a covenant could be placed on the property to prevent heat pump fans being installed adjacent to neighbouring homes.

Traffic

Some meeting participants expressed concern about traffic safety due to the increased number of vehicles turning onto Finlayson from Highview. The day care already generates traffic at certain times of the day. Mr. Peterson pointed out that the construction of one new house was not likely to significantly increase traffic.

Setbacks

One participant asked whether the reduced setbacks (variances) would affect allowable setbacks on adjacent properties; Mr. Peterson indicated they would not.

Construction

Some meeting participants expressed concern about potential blasting related to excavation, as the area is rocky and some adjacent houses have brick and mortar foundations. Mr. Peterson indicated that a full geotechnical study has not yet been completed; should blasting be required contractors carry insurance and must follow appropriate procedures. He suggested that neighbours take before and after photos as a precaution. Neighbours also requested that the bollards separating Highview and Lang not be removed during construction.

Thank you on behalf of the neighbourhood for the opportunity to comment on this proposed development.

Jenny Fraser (no electronic signature available)
CALUC Chair,
Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee

cc. Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee nag@quadravillagecc.ca

Evan Peterson evan@barefootplanning.com