

18 September 2018

Mayor and Council
c/o
Leanne Taylor
Senior Planner
City of Victoria
1 centennial way



RE: Multi-family Residential Proposal
919 and 923 Caledonia Street, Victoria, BC

RE: Revised RZ and DP Submission

Mayor and council,

We are pleased to present a submission for the rezoning and development permit for 919 and 923 Caledonia prepared by Hillel Architecture.

Background

A former design office created several design outcomes for this composition which were reviewed by the planning and heritage departments of the COV, and were presented to the community residential association. Hillel Architecture (HA) was retained to reinvent the project with the benefit of those minutes, records of community presentations, and extensive COV staff correspondence from the heritage and planning departments.

Following a review of previous project records, design outcomes, and the expressed opinions of neighbours and of two COV departments, a comprehensive design outcome reinventing the project was prepared by Hillel Architecture and presented first to municipal and heritage and planning staff.

With this review concluded at the COV with a positive reception, HA went on to re-interview the Land Use Committee of the Neighbourhood Residents Association to ensure the project was a correct interpretation of their feedback from the residential association.

With this second positive reception the proposal - and only as these two initial receptions were positive - was it advanced to a presentation to the neighbourhood association. That evening presentation followed an earlier far larger project at Wellburn's Market drawing an audience from a far larger area. An energized audience, with many attendees from outside the community, expressed concern mostly over density of the multi-family portion, and the use of a sloped roof design outcome.

Heritage home

919 Caledonia Avenue, built in the 1880's, is one of just a handful of houses still in existence within Victoria. The house is a good representation of popular speculative homes built in the era with similarities found in the design, materials, details and ornamentation. The two storey, front gabled homestead-style house is one of a set of at least four similar houses in a row.

The neighboring house at 929 Caledonia Avenue retains the original string course and frieze in the front gable creating the appearance of a pediment. Similar to the neighbour's 929 Caledonia, our 919 Caledonia has an angled bay with overhead and lower wall panels on the main floor to the right of the entry porch. The original entry door, its overhead transom and

accompanying side-lights remain to the left of the entry porch. The full width front porch presents 3 pairs of twin columns to the streetscape. A visually important feature to the home.

It is possible that Thomas Hooper was involved in building of at least some of the houses within this cluster along Caledonia. Thomas Hooper was involved in this heritage home as his signature can be found on the plumbing plans for 919 Caledonia.

The Protection of 919 Caledonia

The project features the preparation of a new foundation and the relocation of 919 Caledonia on to this new foundation so that it would reside in the former location of 923 Caledonia. The intent is a thoughtful repair and restoration of the exterior.

The building was recorded with rectified architectural photography. All four elevations document the current elements of its architectural style, trim, finishes, and their conditions. In many cases there is a distinct departure from acceptable conditions of weather protection to the home, and structural sufficiency. Yet even with its current deteriorated condition, each part remains. Each feature, trim, railing component exists in sufficient condition to be an excellent record of their original form. Where details cannot be saved, new parts can be cut. The original homes were built of time honed traditional detailing. These varied slightly across the four homes originally present in order that each was distinct, however this detailing was achieved with common tools, in straightforward manners, easily now repaired or made anew.

This project proposes, one; a **heritage designation** be applied to this home following its relocation for its continued protection, and two; ensures a composition to **place this building and its neighbor in context**. This second level of proposal goals is critical to the understanding of the total composition.

Proposal Description

Along the Caledonia streetscape, 4 residences once existed that were built at the same time, each with subtly different exterior details to differentiate the homes: 919, 923, 929, and 933 Caledonia. 923 Caledonia lost its battle with time, and without structural sufficiency, was removed.

Our project intent is to build a new foundation at "923" currently empty, and to lift and place "919" on this new foundation. Then to repair, and to heritage designate this home. With our newly restored home residing beside the neighbor's - our project would provide a streetscape for the recently restored 929 Caledonia. 929 Caledonia would no longer be alone.

In the former location - 919 Caledonia - our intent is a new home designed to respect the design cues from these two heritage homes. This extends that street scape to three homes in a row, and would point towards the eventual saving of 933 Caledonia if those owners chose to do so.

Care and attention has been made to consider the form, character, and spacing of those heritage homes, the streetscape progression, the similarity of ridge hts, their distinct forms of entry porch, the assessment of their similarities verses their differences.

The context of heritage homes and their revitalization

Placing our "authentic" at 923 Caledonia, adjacent to the "authentic" already existing at 929 Caledonia provides that neighbour with setting and context. Extending this single, freestanding, restored *but alone* home, into a larger context we believe is important.

This total composition, and the why we have placed what we have, where we have, is a worthy contribution to the understanding of, and significance of, the homes. The composition is supportive of 929 - a neighbour outside of our project. It is supportive of our 923 with in our project. Our new residence at 919 matches scale, form and character, extends the context while varying the smaller details.

Our new multi-family is a required transition to the larger, fuller, denser flat roofed apartment / condominium blocks that surround this area. This backdrop is also supportive. If any other style was realized - such as a flat roofed apartment style condominium in this proximity; the setting would immediately communicate: "one house deep". So the heritage setting of three homes wide along the street would sadly also communicate no depth to that same audience. It is that shallowness - the equivalent of saving only a facade - that we wish to avoid. Creating a background is as important in the same way we chose to shape its foreground. In the foreground the proposal shows two front yard green spaces, each with a pathway to the two private front porches, as entries to these two residences, as would have existed at the time.



The entry walkway between our two street fronts is walking into a defined setting.. The heritage buildings are not just heritage buildings to the public on the street side only their face preserved - they have another role: internally to this small boutique project - the setting benefits everyone on site who call this home.

Saving the detailed and imposing side bay window of the current 919 and having that in our central pedestrian walkway / entry way is critical to that character leaving the street front and being extended within the property - clearly not "facadism".

The multi-family building

Our proposal is also to place behind these street front homes, a modest sized multi-family building housing 16 units. This building takes design cues from the foreground heritage homes, in order that this small composition of elements reside together harmoniously, in tune with each other, sharing an interconnected style, materials, colour, & select details.

A departure from a rectangular flat roofed building form. That flat roof line was criticized in earlier proposals for this site. A rectangular form, we feel, would undermine the careful attention to the composition elements at the street.

Proposal as Transitional piece

There are many examples of 3 and four storey sloped roof buildings within Victoria, indeed many heritage buildings in our downtown core with sloped roofs extending their composition several floors higher. The proposal herein serves a secondary purpose of a transitional piece from single family in scale to the surrounding significantly larger and more dense developments that surround it.

Residential need and demand analysis

The building is a long term rental use building, boutique in scale and form, offering 19 residential units, 21% two bedroom models and 79% one bedroom models. This development offers no open concept studio units as these are being proposed in high numbers elsewhere. A modest development in size and density for the discriminating renter interested in a smaller scale, and closer relationship with neighbours.

Safety and security

Between the two homes, personal security is assured through a control gate, permitting only residents to travel into the site.

Transportation

Earlier proposals were submitted with accompanying parking assessments made by Watt Consulting Group.

The parking demand outlined was that of 14 cars and the proposal at that time demonstrated 13 stalls (above grade). It was deemed at that time by Watt Consulting that a 1 stall variance from those calculations was supportable. The Parking Bylaw criteria at that time demonstrated 27 stalls. The actual variance being supported was from a bylaw requirement of 27 to a demand requirement supportive of 13 stalls. A variance of 14 stalls.

The current proposal developed by Hillel Architecture, conceals all vehicles in an underground parkade, an improvement over earlier submissions. In addition, when appraised under the new Parking Bylaw, the criteria generates a parking stall need again of 14 cars for its current 19 unit design, while providing only 13 cars stalls on site. The proposal seeks no parking variance for unit holders, and seeks a parking variance of 1 stall that would have serviced guest parking needs.

Conclusion

This proposal intends to envelope its residents with a common environment of form and character, detail and trim, colour and landscaping. The neighboring 929 Caledonia is not a participant in this proposal but is a clear beneficiary should it be permitted to be realized. The City is also a beneficiary for not only do we place a current existing restored home in a streetscape supportive to it, by extending that context to three homes in length, but we encourage the potential of 933 Caledonia to join the composition should the owner wish. 923 Caledonia currently stands alone. With this proposal we achieve a critical mass ensuring this portion of Caledonia is memorable, unique. A well landscaped and well balanced enclave from the larger urban nature growing up around it.

Regards

Peter Hardcastle
Hillel Architecture Inc.