

## Heather McIntyre

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**From:** Deanna Bhandar [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** July 15, 2019 11:03 AM  
**To:** Victoria Mayor and Council  
**Cc:** Leanne Taylor; Kathy Stinson  
**Subject:** RE: Cool Aid Society: 959 Balmoral Road property  
**Attachments:** Letter\_Cool Aid\_953-959 Balmoral\_Development Impact Analysis.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

I write to you regarding the property that Cool Aid owns at 959 Balmoral Road which is presently occupied by a rooming house operated as affordable rental housing. There is currently a Rezoning and Development Permit application before Council for our neighbouring property - 953 Balmoral Road. The proposal is to create an 11-unit market rental building over 4 storeys. While we strongly support the efforts of private developers to create more rental housing supply in Victoria, we do have significant concerns regarding the impacts of this development proposal on the livability for our current tenants, and the considerable limitations that this development, with its list of requested variances, will cause for the potential future redevelopment of our property at 959 Balmoral. I have attached an impact assessment of 953 Balmoral Road's proposed development on our property which has been prepared by Paul Hammond of Low Hammond Rowe Architects. The impact assessment clearly outlines the gravity of our neighbour's development proposal on our property and I hope that Council will give this analysis serious consideration as you deliberate on this proposal.

Under the Core Residential designation in the OCP, both our property and the neighbouring 953 Balmoral Road are envisioned to achieve a density of 2.0 floor area ratio for properties with a minimum lot size of 920 square meters. If these two properties were consolidated and the full development potential of this land was realized, 40 – 50 units of housing could be created in a very economical project which would adhere to all zoning and site requirements, without the need for variances. The most recent developments in the area have achieved an increase in market rental housing. While this market rental housing will be an asset to the community, it will not alleviate the needs of our very low income residents, nor does it fully realise the community's potential for more diverse and equitable housing stock. There have not been any new affordable rental or supportive housing units created in the North Park neighbourhood to increase options for people experiencing homelessness in the immediate area; our neighbourhood's most vulnerable residents. This gentrification of the downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods will further displace low income people and people at risk of homelessness. Providing housing options across the spectrum is needed to build inclusive communities.

In summary, it's very difficult for us to be in this position of opposing our neighbour's development proposal as our general position is to strongly advocate for any new rental housing in our community. We have reached out to our neighbour to discuss our concerns regarding his application. Unfortunately, he did not have time to meet with us and hear these concerns. We would respectfully ask that you consider the impacts of the 953 Balmoral Road development proposal on our property located at 959 Balmoral Road. We echo the remarks and concerns found both in the Staff Reports (dated March 15, 2018; June 7, 2018; September 6, 2018 and July 4, 2019), and the attached design review from Low Hammond Rowe Architects, which succinctly shows the impact that this development proposal and its requested variances would have on our property. Should you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We thank Mayor and Council for their ongoing support of Cool Aid, and for their dedication to improving the equity and diversity of housing stock in our community.

Yours Sincerely,

Deanna Bhandar

Deanna Bhandar MSc  
Director, Real Estate Development



Victoria Cool Aid Society



Victoria, BC V8W 1N9



*Together we will end homelessness.*

Victoria Cool Aid Society acknowledges the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose traditional territories we build homes, lives, and community. HÍSW̱ḴE.



08 May 2019

LOW  
HAMMOND  
ROWE  
ARCHITECTS

Ms Deanna Bhandar, MSc.  
Director, Real Estate Development  
Victoria Cool Aid Society  
101-749 Pandora Avenue  
Victoria, BC, V8W 1N9

**Re: DRAFT Impact Analysis of Proposed Development at 953 Balmoral Rd on Cool Aid Owned Property**  
953 ~ 959 Balmoral Road, Victoria BC

Dear Deanna,

We were asked by Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS) to analyse the proposed redevelopment of 953 Balmoral Road, to review potential impacts on the adjacent 959 Balmoral Rd property, which contains a one storey rooming house for low income people, owned by VCAS.

The proposed development at 953 Balmoral Rd, represented by Rezoning Application No. 00598 and Development Permit with Variance Application No. 000506 (North Park), consists of a four-storey rental building with 11 units. Our analysis considers this proposed development relative to three categories:

1. Comparison to requirements of existing R2 Zone, standard R3-1 Zone & the OCP
2. Impact of this development on adjacent Rooming House at 959 Balmoral Rd
3. Potential limits to future development of adjacent Cool Aid owned property

**Summary:**

The following analysis shows that the proposed development, currently R-2 Zone, does not meet the requirements of R3-1 Zone in density, site coverage, site area, setbacks, or open site space for similar sized developments; has significant impacts on the current Cool Aid Rooming House building; and would greatly limit future Cool Aid development of the 959 Balmoral Rd property, unless the same or similar rezoning concessions are made to this property as well.

**Analysis:**

**1. Comparison to requirements of existing Zone, comparable Zone and the OCP:**

While the proposed development meets the intensions of the OCP and R3-1 Zone, whereby increased density and number of storeys are considered, beyond the minimal R2 Zone, the size and quantity of requested variances, as compared to R3-1 zone, will have considerable negative impact on the 959 property.

- a. According to the Committee of the Whole Report prepared by Development Services, dated February 22, 2018, recommendations were made to decline the application, arguing that the site is too small to accommodate such a large development, considering the following required variances to the 'comparable zone' R3-1, Multiple Dwelling District:

- Setbacks (6.1m reduced to 1.52m),
- Lot coverage (30% increased to 43%),
- Site open space (30% reduced to 15.3%)
- Small lot size (671.5m<sup>2</sup> down from 920m<sup>2</sup> envisioned as minimum for R3-1 Zone).

The report further highlights the intentions explicit in the Official Community Plan for Core Residential Areas: *“The OCP encourages the logical assembly of development sites to enable the best realization of development potential for the area”*.

It is clear that this proposed development is too large for the available site area, which is why such variances are required. Critically, it is the adjacent property at 959 Balmoral Rd that will suffer the most harmful impacts from these variances. To quote the above noted Report; *“Proposing a four-storey building on a lot with a site area of 671.5m<sup>2</sup> is tight and compromises the site planning..., and will also impact the relationship with adjacent properties in the short-term and influence the redevelopment of those lots in the future”*.

- b. At the subsequent Committee of the Whole meeting on June 7, 2018, a motion was passed to postpone consideration of the application for 2 months and requested the applicant to meet with adjoining neighbours to explore possible consolidation of the adjoining lots. As no agreement between neighbouring property owners was reached, the applicant proceeded to Committee of the Whole, with the same request for variances to the Development Permit application.

Similarly, a second Committee of the Whole Report was prepared, dated August 23, 2018, again recommending the application be declined by Council, considering no substantial change was made to the variances being requested.

## 2. Impact of this development on adjacent Rooming House at 959 Balmoral Rd:

The most significant impact of this development on 959 Balmoral is the four-storey building located only 1.52 m from the east property line. The proposed development will dwarf over the 1-1/2 storey Rooming House, which will block out the sun to the west façade, year-round. The Rooming house has 12 lower windows and upper main level windows on the west façade, which would be blocked by the proposed building, running the length of the Rooming House. The attached sketch images illustrate the impact:



Fig.1 - Sun study



Fig. 2 – Aerial View from North West

We note that the DP submission shows the Rooming House situated parallel to the west property line, on the floor plans, although the site plans seems to accurately depict the location. However, the renderings certainly downplay the proximity of the two buildings. The following sketch images show the approximate relationship of the proposed development to the existing Rooming House, as viewed from Balmoral:

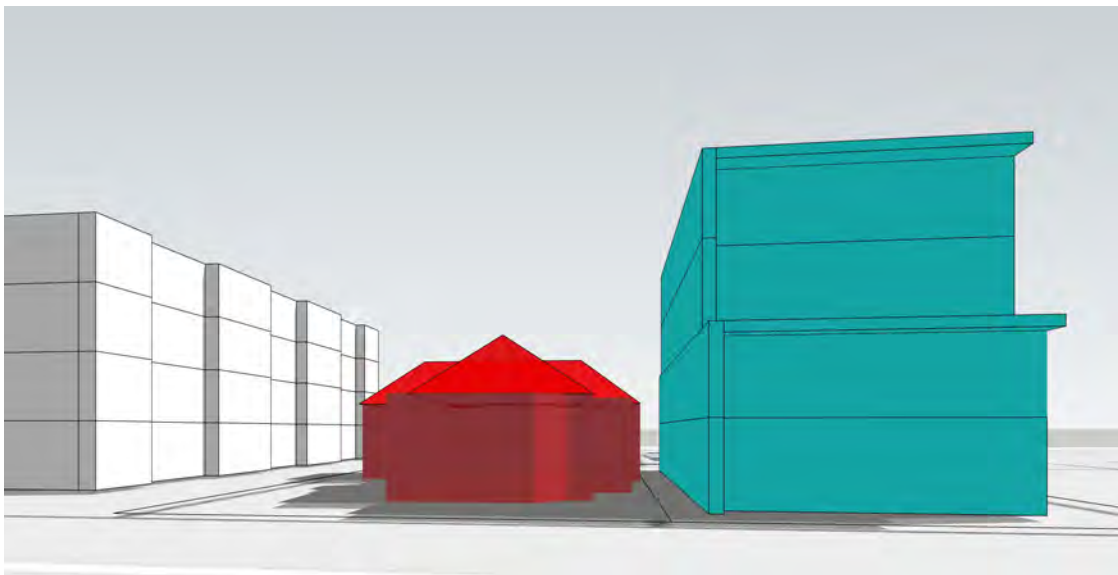


Fig. 3 – Sketch Elevation Viewed from Balmoral

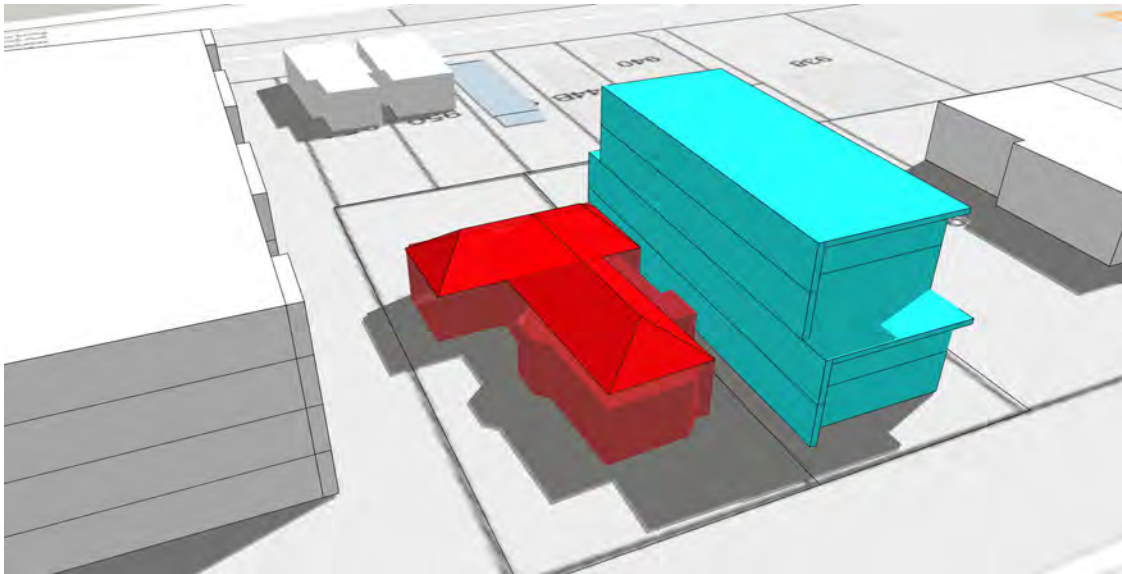


Fig. 4 – Sketch Aerial View from North East

**3. Impact of this development on potential future development of 959 Balmoral Rd:**

The most significant impact this proposed development would have on future development of the adjacent property at 959 Balmoral Road, would be if the same rezoning and development permit variances were not also extended to the 959 Balmoral property. Without such guarantee, the limitation would be severe. Competing with setbacks, building height, density and open space issues would limit the development to a townhouse scale, which would again be dwarfed by the proposed development at 953 Balmoral.

- a. The following sketch diagrams illustrate what would be possible if the same size/scale development were to be implemented on the 959 Balmoral property. The building would be located in the same position as the 953 development, 1.52m from the east property line, allowing for separation between the two buildings. Driveway access would be limited to the west side of the property, but the limited setback on the east side would be adjacent to a four-storey apartment, which has higher density. Concerns for overlook and limiting distance issues may have a negative impact on successfully realizing the necessary development variances required to make the development viable.



Fig. 5 – Site plan showing similar scale development on 953 and 959 Balmoral Rd



Fig. 6 – Aerial Perspective showing similar scale development on 953 and 959 Balmoral Rd

- b. An alternative development that could benefit both properties, while still maintaining independence, would be to build to a shared zero-lot line in the centre of both sites. Such a development would allow the proposed limited 1.52m setback to be removed at the shared property line and added to the outer property lines. This would put much needed distance between the two developments and adjacent properties, facilitating space for an increased naturalized buffer.



Fig. 7 – Site plan showing similar zero lot line developments on 953 and 959 Balmoral Rd

The difficulty of successfully developing this option involves the timing between developments and obtaining approvals from Council to develop these two sites independently. Similar to development option 3b noted above. Figure 8 illustrates this option in perspective view.

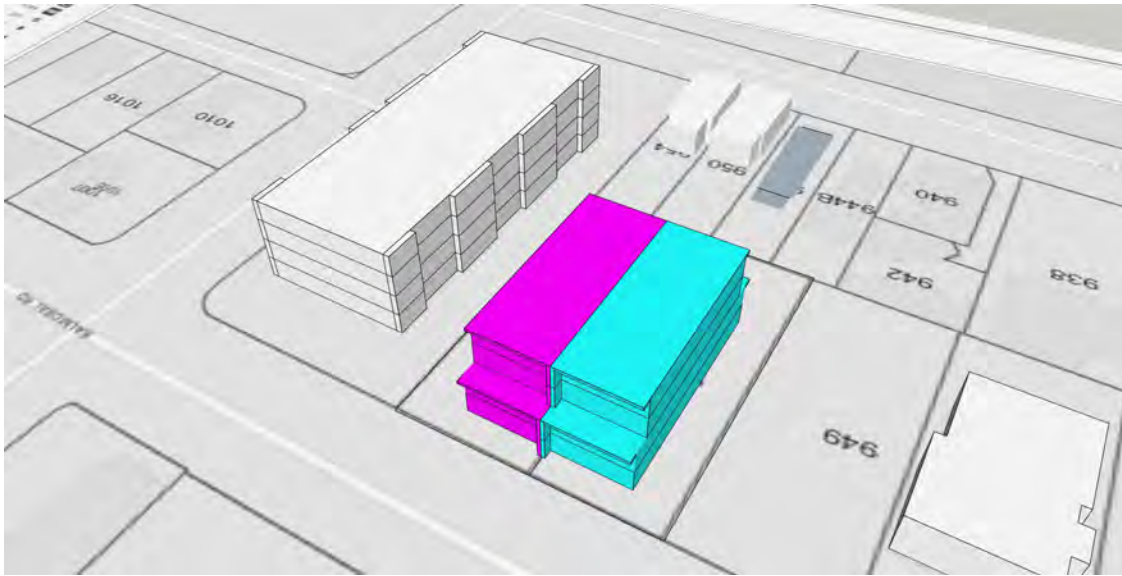


Fig. 8 – Aerial view showing similar zero lot line developments on 953 and 959 Balmoral Rd

In conclusion, the proposed development for 953 would have significant negative impacts on the existing Rooming House as well as on future development of your 959 Balmoral Road property. The only equitable way to mitigate these negative impacts would be for Council to grant the same rezoning and development permit variances to your property, at the same time of approving them for proposed development on 953 Balmoral Road.

Alternatively, as recommended by Development Services, future developments for both sites should either be reduced in scale, height and footprint, or developed together on a consolidated site.

Yours truly,

**LOW HAMMOND ROWE ARCHITECTS INC**

**Paul Hammond**, Architect AIBC, MRAIC, CPHD  
Principal

[Redacted contact information]

cc. Kathy Stinson, CEO, Victoria Cool Aid Society



15 July 2019

Method Built Homes Ltd.  
The Garage  
4566 Cordova Bay Road  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8X 3V5

**Attn: Mayor and Council**  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8W 1P6

Dear Ms. Mayor and Members of Council,

Re: 953 Balmoral Avenue: 11-unit purpose-built workforce apartment building – Rezoning and DP

Further to my letter of 06 March 2019, and Staff's report of 04 July 2019 (the "Report"), please note the following.

On Page 2 of the Report, Staff note the following:

*In accordance with Council's motion above, on October 24, 2018, the Advisory Design Panel reviewed the proposal and provided a recommendation that the applicant make changes related to the massing and side yard setbacks, and provide design consideration to the landscaping, privacy of ground-oriented units, front entryways and balconies on the upper units (minutes attached). In response to the ADP's comments and recommendation, the applicant made some revisions to the landscaping by adding some landscaping in the front yard, a landscaping strip on the east side of the building and the surface parking area and a trellis system along the rear property line. The applicant also added glazed front doors to soften the front entryways. There are no changes related to the massing and side yard setbacks.*

While this tells part of the story with respect to massing, it does not tell the entire story. Attachment C to the Report, are the Minutes from the 24 October 2018 Advisory Design Panel (the "ADP") meeting. At Page 4, the ADP discussed the following:

- *opportunity to shift the building's massing, possibly by adding one storey, to reduce and adjust the building footprint, mitigate the impact of a long eastern wall to neighbours, and maintain the proposed density*

As noted at paragraph 1 of my 06 March 2019 letter, the issue of re-distributing the existing massing was discussed, but it was discussed in the context of re-distributing the massing upwards to increase the number of levels of the proposed apartment building. This is something that initially supported approximately 3-4 years ago, but have since strenuously opposed. As a result, reducing the footprint and re-distributing the massing to higher floors was not considered a feasible option.

Yours very truly,



Rajinder S. Sahota