

Pamela Martin

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: June 26, 2019 6:02 PM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: 919 & 923 Caledonia

Hello,

I am writing in regards to the public hearing scheduled for June 27th for a rezoning permit for 919 and 923 Caledonia.

My name is [REDACTED] and I live in [REDACTED] 930 North Park Street. I have a few concerns about the proposed development.

First, my condo faces the proposed development. I am concerned about my privacy because of this. It seems as if the development will be very close to the property line and, as such, very close to 930 North Park. I am no expert at reading the kind of schematics available to the public but it seems, according to the most recent, that there will be windows facing this way, which means that people will be able to see directly into my home unless I keep blinds closed all day. Right now, the only thing that would block the view is a tree which is deciduous, which means it will only provide meaningful protection of my privacy half of the year. I also see in the letter to mayor and council that considerations seem to have been made for the properties to the east and west of the proposed development, but the letter, nor any of the documents available, mention any such considerations for our building which is to the south. It could be argued that our property would be more impacted by this development than the others mentioned.

My second concern is that, while at first glance, this plan would appear to provide more housing, what actually appears to be happening is the development will take the affordable housing that already exists on site and replace it with luxury apartments. I would argue that what this neighbourhood needs is more AFFORDABLE housing rather than dense, yet unaffordable housing. Even if the home that is currently there is being "updated" that update will likely make it less affordable.

My third concern is aesthetics. This development is unlike anything else in the neighbourhood and it will stick out. It will make our neighbourhood feel less cozy and more industrial.

I understand that these comments will go on the public record, I would like as little of my personal information (email, name, etc) to be reflected in the public record as possible.

Merrily,
[REDACTED]

Pamela Martin

From: Gordon Webster <[REDACTED]>
Sent: June 27, 2019 7:18 AM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: 919 and 923 Caledonia, Rezoning Application No. 00622

June 27, 2019

Mayor and Council:

Re: 919 and 923 Caledonia, Rezoning Application No. 00622

Our names are Gordon Webster and Ruth McDonald. We are two of the owners of 927/929 Caledonia, and we are writing in regard to the rezoning application for the neighbouring properties at 919 and 923 Caledonia.

We purchased 929 Caledonia in 1997. At that time it was zoned as a duplex, but operated as a fourplex. A couple of years later two of the units were closed by the City as the result of a complaint by the owner of 923 Caledonia. We subsequently applied to have 929 Caledonia rezoned as a triplex, and simultaneously applied for heritage designation of the main house. These legal changes were approved.

The house at 929 Caledonia was built in 1885, making it one of the older homes in the City. The other two structures on the property were built in about 1890 and 1905. (The structure built in 1890, the original stable, has been substantially renovated). At the time of the public hearing for the rezoning application, Councillor Madoff spoke eloquently of how 929 Caledonia was a rare example of a property with several structures housing separate families. Such housing was common years ago, but there are few surviving examples.

We would be supportive of the partial redevelopment of 919 and 923 Caledonia that would see a modest increase in density reflecting the historical use of properties in the neighbourhood. For example, converting the house at the front of 919 Caledonia to a duplex, and constructing a couple of cottages or another duplex at the rear would increase the legal density by a factor of four, while preserving the character of the former cluster of five heritage homes.

We cannot, however, support the application that is currently before Council. It is a very dense use of land in a traditional neighbourhood. The massing will change the character of the street, and the height and proximity of the four-storey structure to our property line will adversely affect our tenants' enjoyment of their homes.

My wife and I have ownership interests in three character houses in Victoria. While we live in one of them, and will eventually benefit financially from our interests in the other two, we also feel that we are custodians of these structures. I like to think we have maintained them and avoided unsympathetic changes, so that future generations of Victorians will be able to enjoy them. We feel, however, that approval of changes such as the ones proposed for 919 and 923 Caledonia imperils the survival of heritage homes. We will probably sell 929 Caledonia in its current form in a few years, but in our opinion the redevelopment of the adjacent properties in the manner proposed makes it quite likely that there will be a future application for redevelopment of 929 Caledonia, perhaps with the additional involvement of the two properties to the east. While the density of housing in Victoria needs to increase to accommodate a growing population, that must be balanced against other issues, such as the preservation of some of the City's heritage homes.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter.

Gordon Webster

Ruth McDonald

Sent from my iPhone

Pamela Martin

From: don Grier [REDACTED]
Sent: June 27, 2019 7:34 AM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: submission for June 27 public hearing
Attachments: Dons planning dept letter.docx

Please find attached a letter for council regarding the public hearing for 919 & 923 Caledonia (REZ000622). I do not wish for my email address, address or phone number to be made public..

ph. [REDACTED]

address: [REDACTED]

Thank you

Don Grier

Dear Mayor and Council,

My name is Don Grier, I am an owner of [REDACTED].

Our property is immediately adjacent to the proposed redevelopment of 919 and 923 Caledonia, so we are directly affected by this proposal. I am writing to strongly object to the massing of this proposal, and to the threat it poses to the diversity of housing on the block which city council committed to upholding several years ago.

To address this I need to give a brief history of our property. In the late 90s a small group of us bought [REDACTED]. At the time this was a legal duplex with two out-buildings at the rear of the property. A cottage (built and rented since the 1930s) and a carriage house that had been converted to rental accommodation (probably in the 1980s), both of which were not legal accommodation. After a complaint, these two units were shut down by the city. In discussions with the planning department (Michael Dillistone & Steve Barber) it was agreed that planning would support a zoning change to allow one extra unit at the rear of the property. It was strongly suggested that we consider having the house designated heritage, as the city wanted to anchor this group of five houses from further development encroachment. Given the architectural heritage value of our house and others on the block, and given the history of our property (home to the Juene brothers – sail makers, home to Margaret Jenkins, home confiscated from Japanese fishers who were interned), we were happy to act on this suggestion to pursue heritage designation, in order to anchor this group of heritage houses. We reconfigured the out buildings, joining the two, and invested a considerable sum to bring it up to code.

Since this time our neighbour let his home fall into disrepair and later sold the home in conjunction with the sale of 919 Caledonia. The current owner chose to demolish 923 Caledonia and is now pursuing rezoning to accommodate a 19 unit 3 ½ storey rental structure.

Given the city's desire in 1999 to preserve this group of houses, and our acting in good faith by designating this house as suggested by the planning department, I would hope the city would not reward a developer, who chose to demolish one of these houses, with a substantial rezoning change. If awarded, this will only pave the way for rezoning and development of the properties on the other side of us. There will not be incentive to invest in their homes when it is clear the city is favouring large developments and the value of their homes are in the land value as potential redevelopment sites. It is not unreasonable to foresee the day when our lone house is squeezed between two large developments.

I am also concerned about the loss of housing diversity on this street. On our block we currently have two moderately large rental complexes: Quadra Terrace, which has 34 rental units, and Rotary House, which has 41 subsidised units. As well there are two strata Townhouse complexes, two duplexes, a triplex and three single family dwellings. To remove single family dwellings and add another rental complex seems to be placing an undue amount of rental unit stock in a concentrated area. This is not downtown, it is still a diverse community that needs to preserve some of its many forms of housing stock.

As I've mentioned, I also object to the massing of this proposed development, and its effect on the privacy of our house. The developer has offered to move the house at 919 over next to ours, which at face value seems a good idea – making some effort to preserve the heritage cluster. Unfortunately he has chosen to wrap the new development around the side and rear of the house, incorporating the house by attaching it to the new structure. The new structure dwarfs this house and hovers over it like an alien space ship. This is not heritage preservation, it preserves the house only as a façade to the attached development. It does little to help the transition to the last remaining houses.

This project comes within a few feet of our property, it towers over our common area and there appears to be 7 - 9 suites with major window exposures looking directly into the yard and house. Two of these are suites with front doors facing into and opening within a few feet of our back yard. If this was a residential development, this vast window exposure would not be allowed. We have long-term tenants, they have a right to expect the privacy that this neighbourhood afforded them when they moved here.

If there is to be a development here, it should not infringe on the neighbourhood in such an invasive fashion. To accomplish this, I believe the new building needs to be set back from our property further, the building should not be higher than the height of the house that currently stands there. One only needs to look east to the 1100 block of Caledonia to see a development that is more sympathetic to the surrounding buildings.

The issue here for the city is heritage preservation and maintaining community diversity vs. densification and more rental units near downtown. I know the current hot button issue is providing more rental units, and it is a delicate balancing act with other competing considerations, but the city needs to be careful. If this issue so dominates all the decisions being made, we will wake up one day, look around and wonder why we look like every other city with bland mono-architecture and little heritage or diversity.

Can we not think a little more creatively? In 1999 when the city granted us special zoning, they said they wanted to try this out. Essentially they were asking the question: can we

provide more density with this zoning and anchor the heritage cluster, with little impact on the neighbourhood? I think this creative planning, as an experiment, has proven to be a spectacular success: we have a small community of long term renters who support each other, and there is no visible change to the street. If the city wants rental density, why not continue this creative planning and expand our zoning to all of the lots along this street and encourage out-buildings with one or even two suites each. This zoning could give this developer the opportunity to have four units on each property for a total of eight units. Obviously this is much less than the current proposal, but the cost of building would be less, and given what these properties sold for, there would still be a good return on investment. If the city encouraged this type of development for the other two houses on the block there would be an addition of four more suites on the block.

This kind of multi-family use of current housing stock encourages density while retaining the architectural integrity of neighbourhoods. Mid density housing that retains its connection to the street level promotes community within the housing complex and in the neighbourhood in a way that high density units do not.

I understand that an additional 19 units has much appeal for the city, but 19 units does not mean 19 affordable units. We currently supply affordable rental housing, the houses which this development are replacing once supplied affordable housing. We were fortunate to have bought our house in the 90s, our mortgage costs are low and we have committed to providing affordable suites. We rent large well kept 1 and 2 bedroom suites that range from \$785 - \$1025 per month, more than 50% below current market rent for these kind of spaces.

Victoria has embraced density as a way to sustain the downtown and encourage more eco-sensitive habits, this is commendable. However, this policy can also encourage the destruction of older blocs of homes that provide reasonable rents. You may have more units but you displace affordable units. Is there no room for family homes housing multiple residents in North Park? These projects are pushing this kind of housing out. The loss of this housing is to the detriment of renters, it is to the detriment of the neighbourhood and ultimately it is to the detriment of a sustainable city.

I urge planning and city councillors to stick to their original goal of saving what is left of the heritage and diversity on this street, and continue to pursue creative planning that, in addition, could achieve the goal of offering quality rental density as well.

Thank you,

Don Grier