

Letter to Mayor & Council

May 3, 2019

Re: Proposed Small Lot Housing Subdivision at 1302 Finlayson Street

Owner: Paul and Marta Fisher

Applicant: Adrian Brett & Associates

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

This letter provides a rationale for the proposed development at 1302 Finlayson Street (at Highview Street). The project entails the subdivision of an existing R1-B lot into two lots, one R1-S2 single family residential lot and one site-specific zoned lot allowing the continued use of the existing commercial neighbourhood amenity. The existing residential/commercial building (the English Cabinetmaker store) will be preserved and a new single family home is proposed behind it, which will front onto Highview Street. The proponent intends to rent the above grade residential unit of the existing building, retain the existing commercial use and utilize the new single family home as his primary residence. The project will also provide a 0.86 road dedication and a 2.5m-wide Statutory Right of Way for future streetscape improvements along Finlayson.

RATIONALE & SUPPORT

Policy Support

Official Community Plan

- Consistent with Traditional Residential Land Use designation, which supports ground-oriented built forms.
- Consistent with numerous housing and infill policies.

Development Permit Area (15A)

Consistent with numerous DPA objectives, including:

- Accommodation of 10% of Victoria's population growth in traditional residential areas
- Support existing commercial services.
- Accommodation of growth in Traditional Residential neighborhoods in a gradual manner that reflects the local context.
- Integrates a single family home into the neighborhood in a manner that respects the established character of the neighborhood.

Small Lot House Rezoning Policy

Consistent with numerous objectives, including:

- Preferred corner lot siting.
- Preserves existing house and business.
- High quality neo-traditional architectural design that is representative of adjacent homes vernacular style.



- Consultation with adjacent neighbours and wider community, more than 75% of neighbors are in favor of the proposed development.

Project Need & Benefits

- Satisfies need for sensitive infill housing in a strategic location – a corner lot on public and active transportation routes with easy access to green space (Highview and Summit Parks are within walking distance)
- Retains an existing local commercial amenity.
- Adds value to the neighborhood via high quality architecture.
- Enhance eyes on the park (Highview Park) and improves public safety.

Servicing

- The site is served by all necessary public infrastructure and services.
- The project will provide a 0.86 Road Dedication and a 2.5m wide SRW to accommodate future improvements along Finlayson Street.
- Very little on-street parking is available on Finlayson Street. The owner and neighbors have organized a petition to ask Council to allow the frontage along Highview Street to remain a gravel shoulder so that existing parking spots can be retained.

Neighbourhood / Appropriateness

The site is appropriate for a small lot rezoning for the following reasons:

- it is a corner lot located on public and active transportation routes.
- The site is walkable to parks, schools, services, and amenities.
- The proposal is consistent with its surrounding development patterns of lot sizes, moderately sized homes, and architectural details.
- The owner has agreed to place the existing commercial/residential building on the City's Heritage Register and has provided a Statement of Significance.
- The owner is willing to covenant the existing upper unit of the building to ensure it retains its use as rental housing into perpetuity.

Impacts & Impact Mitigation

- Project will retain a neighbourhood commercial amenity and retain much needed rental housing.
- Design of new house will improve neighbourhood safety by providing additional sightlines from the new home onto the nearby Highview Park (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design).
- No protected trees will be affected by the addition of this proposed new single family home.
- New house is of a modest scale, consistent with the heights and building footprints of neighbouring homes.
- The second floor windows of the proposed house will be frosted so as to maintain both the resident's and neighbor's privacy. Views from the first floor windows (facing the neighboring property to the east) will be obscured by the 1.5m high fence erected on the property line. Also the new house is positioned to the rear of the neighbour's lot, the



windows on the east side of the new house look onto the neighboring back yard where there are no buildings. Neither house will be in the direct view of its neighbor's windows.

VARIANCES

The proposal requires two setback variances:

1. On the front yard (fronting Highview Street) of the proposed new house, (2.0m proposed), a variance of 4m is requested to allow for the new house to be positioned closer to the street to be more consistent with the position of the existing house, which is setback only 0.43m from Highview Street.
2. On the rear yard (east) of the proposed new house (3.43m proposed) a variance of 2.57m is requested. This requested back yard setback variances is consistent with typical small lot designs. The impact of the rear variance is mitigated by frosted glazing on its east façade, and the adjacent house is located much farther south on its neighbouring lot, out of direct view from the new proposed house.
3. The requested variances do not significantly affect the amount of private outdoor space provided for each lot. The lot with the existing building will have approximately 114m² of private outdoor space and the lot with the new building will have approximately 106m² of outdoor space. In addition to these private outdoor spaces, there is also ample public open space nearby. Highview Park abuts the north property line of this site and contains approximately 1,680m² of outdoor amenity space.
4. There are also many other nearby properties with similar rear and front yard setbacks in the local neighborhood. The following table provides several examples of nearby properties that have rear/front setbacks less than the 6m zoning requirement.

Property Address	Front Yard Setback	Rear Yard Setback
3136 Highview Street	1.5m	4.5m
3135 Mars Street	4.5m	3.2m
3114 Mars Street	3.0m	4.8m
3104 Mars Street	7.0m	0.75m
3122 Highview Street	3.2m	18.0m

SUMMARY

The proposed development is consistent with the objectives and guidelines of the OCP, Development Permit Area 15A and the Small Lot Rezoning policy. This proposal is an example of context-sensitive and neighbourhood-scaled infill housing. It will retain much needed attainable rental housing units in the city, as well as retaining an existing neighbourhood commercial amenity. Moreover, the corner lot location is ideal for this type of development, the proposed design is responsive and sensitive to the neighbourhood, and its orientation will improve public safety by providing more eyes onto Highview Park.