

City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

August 5th, 2019

PROPOSED PROJECT: 956 Heywood Avenue – Design Rationale

INTRODUCTION

Our proposed 6-unit building fronts onto Heywood Avenue, on the eastern edge of Beacon Hill Park. It looks towards the park's open meadow and the baseball diamonds at its north-east corner. The site's current zoning is R3-AM2, which permits four-storey multi-family developments. Currently this is the most common building massing on Heywood Avenue, typified by the particularly large four-storey apartment blocks that flank the subject site.

The current zoning assumes larger parcels, becoming problematic when it is applied to smaller parcels like the subject site. This site is a leftover from when the area had single-family developments. Over the past decades apartment buildings literally built up and around it. In order to facilitate the development of a project that is suitable to the existing use and scale of this streetscape, we are seeking variances to the existing multi-family zoning. The proposed variances will permit us to achieve similar zoning parameters to other recent projects in the area, which dealt with similar circumstances. We've modelled our proposed building per the R-72 zoning of a recent project at 1014 Park Blvd., which did not have the existing multi-family zoning that 956 Heywood does. We've also considered the development currently under construction at 986 Heywood, which has a larger site, but is built to similar height and density.

DESIGN

The horizontal character of 956 Heywood, the predominantly wood facades and the use of screens relate to the linear and decorative qualities of the balconies on the neighbouring buildings. Combined with a flat roof and sympathetic massing, our proposed building will fit seamlessly into the existing streetscape. The use of screens on the facades will provide relief from hot west sun and will enliven the façade within the filigree of the linear overhangs.

The main floor has a wide street-facing common entry garden that accesses the lobby and an open staircase that serves each unit's exterior entry door. This creates a "vertical rowhouse" building shape that encourages interaction between neighbours. This architectural feature will effectively create "doors on the street".

Units are oriented east-west allowing each one to have a strong relationship to the street and the park. Living areas are oriented to face the street, with quiet spaces deeper in the plan. The north and south sides of the building feature a long recess, to break up the mass of the building and provide an opportunity for larger openings and light. Operable screens will provide visual interest for occupants and the neighbouring apartments, while mitigating any loss of privacy between our proposed new building and its existing neighbours.

The plantings and entry garden on the proposed Heywood Avenue elevation will be inspired by the meadows of Beacon Hill Park.

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ZONING

	R3-AM2	R-72 (1014 PARK BLVD)	R3-AM2 (986 HEYWOOD AVE)	PROPOSED
FSR (4 STOREY)	1.2:1	1.6:1 (9782.34 SF / 908.80 SM)	1.6:1 (25132.12 SF / 2334.85 SM)	1.2:1 (7310.51 SF / 679.17 SM)
BUILDING HEIGHT	39.37' / 12.0M	39.70' / 12.10M	46.85' / 14.28M	44.25' / 13.49M
NO. STOREYS	4	4	4	4
SITE COVERAGE	30%	61% (3729 SF / 346.48 SM)	76% (11928.78 SF / 1108.22 SM)	64% (3911.78 SF / 363.42 SM)
OPEN SITE SPACE		32% (1956.45 SF / 181.76 SM)	17% (2663.85 SF / 247.48 SM)	32% (1951.63 SF / 181.31 SM) * 40% (2422.25 SF / 225.03 SM) * Total including landscaped parking roof

DENSITY

The proposed density and FSR will conform to the allowable density as currently zoned. Both 1014 Park Blvd. and 986 Heywood have FSR of 1.6:1, making the density of our project very modest compared to the neighbours.

By design, the proposal has no open parking. The proposed site coverage will be 64%, compared to 62% at 1014 Park Blvd. and 76% at 986 Heywood. Existing zoning allows 30% site coverage. The requested 32% of extra site coverage is a result of completely enclosing and hiding the proposed parking area. The roof of the parking garage will be landscaped at the rear yard, so it will qualify as open site space.

HEIGHT

Due to poor bearing capacity of underlying soils and the complexities of deep excavations on such a tight site, Geotechnical and Structural consultants have concluded that minimal excavation should occur. In order to avoid the underlying soft clays and accommodate covered and enclosed parking within these constraints, we are proposing to have the parking be at grade and the residential units begin on the second story, above the parking. The proposal will seek a height variance of 1.49M, for a total building height of 13.49M; which is still shorter than the height of 986 Heywood Avenue (14.28M), down the street.

SETBACKS

	R3-AM2	R-72 (1014 PARK BLVD)	R3-AM2 (986 HEYWOOD AVE)	PROPOSED
FRONT YARD SETBACK	34.45' / 10.50M	16.40' / 5.00M	12.34' / 3.76M	21.75' / 6.63M
REAR YARD SETBACK PARKING PROJECTION	19.69' / 6.00M	18.70' / 5.70M	23.43' / 7.14M 4.00' / 1.22M	12.44' / 3.79M 5.00' / 1.52M
NORTH SIDE YARD SETBACK	19.69' / 6.00M	4.92' / 1.50M TO HABITABLE NIL TO NON-HABITABLE	17.91' / 5.46M TO HABITABLE 2.95' / 0.90M TO NON-HABITABLE	4.50' / 1.30M
SOUTH SIDE YARD SETBACK	19.69' / 6.00M	4.92' / 1.50M TO HABITABLE NIL TO NON-HABITABLE	8.07' / 5.46 TO HABITABLE 1.87' / 0.57M TO NON-HABITABLE	4.50' / 1.37M
SETBACK EXEMPTIONS	- STEPS & ENTRY CANOPIES 14.75' (4.5M) TO STREET OR 9.84' (3.00M) TO INT. PL - WHERE PL ABUT STREET MAY BE AVG USING FACES WITHIN 4.92' (1.50M) OF REQ'D - NO SETBACK < 9.84' (3.00M) - BALCONY MAY PROJECT 6.56' (2.00M) - BALCONY MAY BE PARTIALLY OR TOTALLY ENCLOSED WHERE IT MATCHES CLADDING - BALCONY OR DECK FACING STREET OR PARK MAY PROJECT INTO SETBACK 9.19' (2.80M)			

FRONT YARD

To be compatible with the neighbouring buildings, our proposed building has a front-yard setback 1.63M larger than allowable per R-72 zoning. A front-yard setback variance is requested, from 10.5M to 6.63M. Corner windows and balconies at the front façade will visually minimize the proposed building's massing. Unlike the neighbouring apartment buildings and the recent development at 1014 Park Blvd, our proposed balconies on the second and third levels will be included in our building footprint and not project any further into our front yard setback.

Our original design proposed a front yard setback of 21'-1", but after feedback from community members and city staff we have revised our design to be more respectful of our neighbours. Although we were only able to push back our building another 8" to have a total building front yard setback of 21'-9", we have shifted the second and third level units further into the property where they are only 6'-8" proud of our neighbours. We also carved out the northwest and southwest corners of the building to improve views to the park.

REAR YARD

The proposed rear-yard setback to the above grade storeys of the building is 1.91M more than the typical setback per R-72 zoning. While the main level projects beyond this setback, its roof will be landscaped and treated as open space, reducing its visual impact on any neighbours.

We are requesting a variance from existing zoning in order to permit the main level to go within 1.52M of the rear property line, and for above grade levels (2-4) to be at 3.79M from the rear property line.

SIDE YARDS

The proposed side-yard setbacks are 0.13M less than the 1.5M requirement per R-72 zoning. This is a result of trying to minimize the variance required for front and rear yard setbacks. We will ensure that the side yard walls and overhangs will be built to code as required by the BCBC 2018 to remove all safety concerns. There will also be no unprotected openings in the wall plane at the setback to ensure neighbour privacy is not encroached upon. Additionally, a 6.83M x 1.93M recess will be carved out of the sides of each above grade floor, to further increase setback relief within the side-yards. R-72 zoning permits uninhabitable parking level to have 0.0M setbacks. The minimum proposed setback to the parking level is 1.37M at the side yards, to allow for a significant landscape buffer.

We seek to vary the existing zoning to allow for the setbacks noted above.

PARKING


	R3-AM2	R-72 (1014 PARK BLVD)	R3-AM2 (986 HEYWOOD AVE)	PROPOSED
NO. UNITS	-	-	21 UNITS	6
PARKING	1.4/UNIT	0.9/UNIT (6 SPACES)	1.4/UNIT (29 SPACES)	1/UNIT (6 SPACES)
VISITOR PARKING	-	-	-	-
BIKE PARKING (SHORT TERM)	6 SPACES	6 SPACES	6 SPACES	6 SPACES
BIKE PARKING (LONG TERM)	1/UNIT (6 SPACES)	1.25/UNIT (9 SPACES)	1.25/UNIT (22 SPACES, 12 NON-CONFORMING)	8 SPACES

A 1:1 ratio will be provided for vehicle parking. This exceeds the required 0.9 parking spaces / unit per R-72 zoning, and is nominally less than the revised Schedule-C requirements. This site is centrally located and close to public transportation and bike routes. The proposed development will provide ample secure long-term bike storage in the parking level.

SUMMARY

The proposed building suits the targeted use and character of the current zoning. It will quietly nestle itself into Heywood Avenue's streetscape. Planning's support for our requested variances will allow for the current zoning's intended uses to continue on, while providing the opportunity for a fresh development that supports empty nesters or young families. The site is perfectly situated to accommodate this modest project near Victoria's historic and important downtown, across from the much-loved Beacon Hill Park.

Sincerely,



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