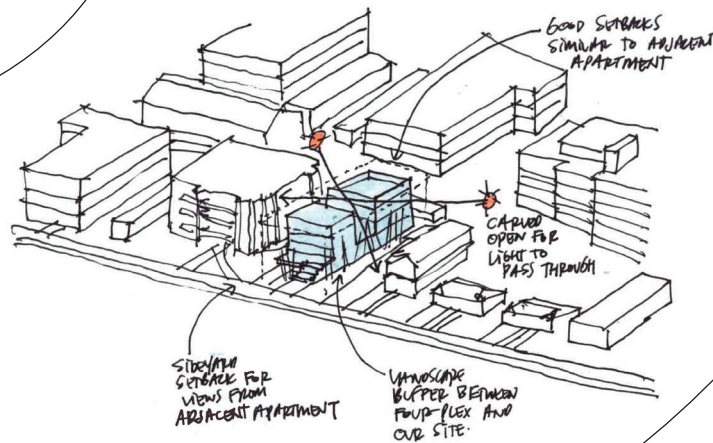


PROPOSED PROJECT:

931 McClure Street

DESIGN RATIONALE



Mayor and Council

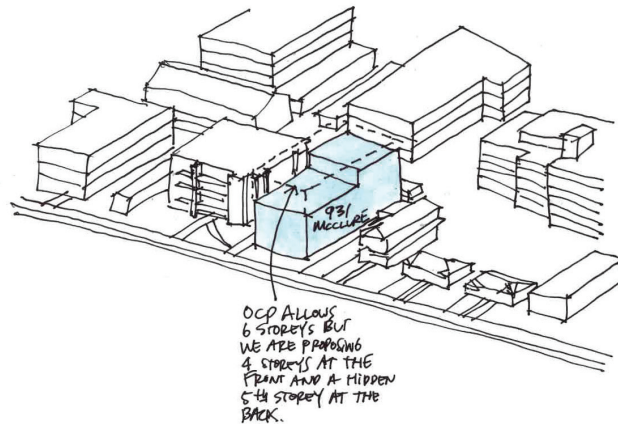
City of Victoria

02 December 2020

ARYZE

Introduction

The design of this proposed 15-unit development draws inspiration from the details and materiality of the historic buildings in the immediate area, creating a modern building that fits in; the height and proportions of the proposal emphasize this relationship. By designing every aspect of the proposal with this context in mind, the building will feel established and fresh. The design goal was to create a building that is subtle and sophisticated, without shouting its presence.

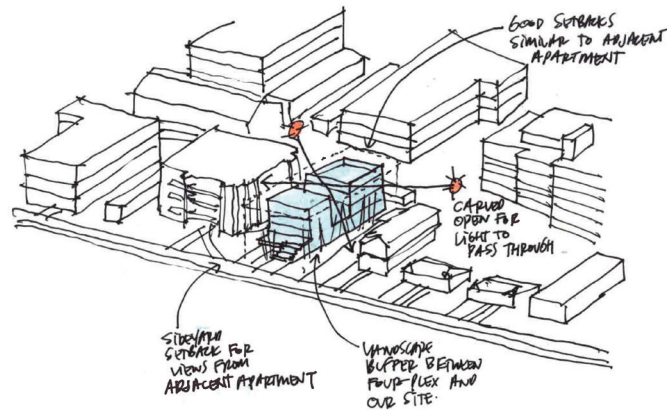


Massing + Design

The building's form acts as a step down in massing width and unit expression between the large condominium apartment building to the east at 945 McClure Street and the medium-sized four-unit condominium building to the west at 923 McClure Street. Even though the OCP allows for six storeys, this proposal is limited to three storeys at the front and four storeys of residential on top of a single storey of landscaped surface parking, to be a good neighbour.

The site is on a unique cul-de-sac section of McClure Street that has been transitioning from single-family houses to large apartments or condominiums since the 1950's. The small and medium scale properties to the west of the subject property are now anomalies, but they add to the eclectic texture of the street. A wide community front step creates a collective access point to the front facing ground-oriented units, while also providing a spot for this area's residents to chat with their neighbours, to catch their breath, or to just enjoy the weather. A narrow drive aisle into the surface open-air parking allows for as much landscaped garden at the front of the building as possible, to mirror the well-tended front gardens seen on this section of McClure Street.





A second row of units near the back of the site is separated from the front units by an airy landscaped courtyard finished in wood and full of plants and trees. This allows the neighbours on each side of the proposal to enjoy natural light deep into their side yards. In fact, with the proposed design the two neighbouring buildings will be exposed to more natural light than a new building under current zoning; a new outright building on the same site could easily (and inevitably) be designed with large side walls and a roof that is nearly the same height as our proposal, with no cut-out in the middle.

The open courtyard will act as the outdoor entry area to all units, to ensure that the noise of residents coming and going is not disruptive to the neighbouring buildings, compared to the long driveway and side entrances at 923 McClure Street or the parkade ramp and mechanized overhead door at 945 McClure Street. By protecting the proposal's occupants from any adjacent noise and exhaust, the adjacent neighbours will in turn have their privacy maintained and enhanced. All of the proposal's units face the open courtyard to enable north-south orientations that avoid significantly sized side windows that might look down into the neighbouring building's side-yards. The adjacent neighbour's privacy is further maintained and enhanced.



945 McClure

The apartment building at 945 McClure Street was smartly designed in the 1980's, anticipating a building larger than a house on the subject property. By having all of its very large condominiums be corner units and by designing most of the windows on its west façade to be bays looking north and south, the interior spaces most impacted by the proposal are not adversely impacted, and these northwest or southwest oriented corner condominiums continue to be pleasant and livable.

By landscaping the proposal's east side yard path with garden, an existing harsh and industrial looking concrete parkade ramp wall—strongly visible from all of the condominiums facing west at 945 McClure Street—will now be a cascading wall of plants and shrubs, installed and maintained at no cost to the owners of 945 McClure Street.

Materiality

Textured stucco on the east and west façades will be the dominant material on the building's sides, above sandblasted exposed pebbled concrete feature walls. On the front and most important façade, the proposal's window mullions, wrought-iron railings, and standing seam metal roof are a nod to the heritage detailing seen in the immediate area and around Victoria's best older neighbourhoods. All horizontal driving, entry, or courtyard surfaces will be grey cobblestones, rounding out a palette that echoes the heritage stone and brick wall across from the subject site on McClure Street. The inner courtyard and all visible deep eaves will be finished with warm-toned wood.



Attainable Housing

We are pleased to provide two, 1-bedroom homes in partnership with the Capital Regional District as price-restricted resale homes that must be sold for 15% below market value in perpetuity. This revised program—designed for our 430 Parry Street project and implemented in all of our market-based projects—ensures our project delivers not only housing diversity but also affordability to create socio-economic diversity in all of Victoria's neighborhoods.

A Net Zero Ready Building

The British Columbia Energy Step Code (Step Code) provides an incremental staircase toward improved performance targets for new construction. The steps provide a pathway toward Net Zero Ready Buildings being the standard by 2032 by putting the focus on performance. The Step code uses a “enclosure first” approach which helps to minimize energy demand and enable the use of lower capacity and highly efficient mechanical equipment. Simply put, a building that loses less energy will use less energy; energy modelling and whole building airtightness testing is used to demonstrate and validate energy efficient design with the constructed environment. The lower steps are intended to bridge traditional construction practices toward better buildings, while the higher steps will challenge industry to improve and innovate.

Step 4 for Part 3 Wood Frame Residential Buildings represents the highest step achievable for this building type, and classifies the building as “Net Zero Ready”. Net Zero Ready means that the building is efficient enough to offset its energy use with future onsite renewable energy generation (ie, solar, wind, etc), meaning the building is capable of generating as much energy as it consumes over time. The building will also be more comfortable and healthy because the occupants will be able to effectively manage temperature and ventilation throughout the building. Committing to building to Step 4 before it becomes a requirement demonstrates a progressive level of leadership toward making buildings better.

Summary

This proposed building gives shape to Fairfield’s community values. Our proposal will fit in while being progressive, it will be built with traditional high-quality building materials that last, and it will balance personal privacy and land values with quiet densification. The proposal’s unit sizes and its combination of market and below-market sale prices will create housing for a mix of people, to bring more vibrancy and economic support to this walkable town centre. The development team has worked to design a building that reflects Victoria’s interesting history while creating a template for smart growth.

Updates from Previous Submissions

The proposed footprint of the development has decreased to provide generous side yards at the east and west property lines, allowing for lush planting beds between neighbouring properties and the proposed building. This will help screen the movement of occupants from both neighbours. The carefully selected landscaping has been revised for minimal upkeep, and to not drop leaves on neighbouring properties. The unit breakdown has been revised from eight townhouses in two blocks at the north and south ends, to now have 15 units broken into two almost equal blocks with six 1-bedroom and nine 2-bedroom units). The plan has been reversed, and a new main entry with its large ceremonial “porch” stair was designed at the north west corner, as a nod to the entry porch at 923 McClure. These refinements allow diagonal views out and across the proposed building from the residents in the northwest corner of 945 McClure Street, and give the proposed building a “house” form that is sympathetic and sensitive to 923 McClure Street.



Luke Mari
Principal
Aryze