



#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

December 15, 2020

Re: 3150 Somerset Street, Rezoning and Development Permit application

Dear Mayor Helps and City of Victoria Council Members,

On behalf of our client, Zebra Design is applying for Rezoning and Development Permit for the property at 3150 Somerset Street in the Hillside-Quadra neighbourhood. The existing house is currently a non-strata duplex on a lot within the R1-B (Single Family Dwelling District) zone. The subject lot is just over 1,190 m² (12,800 sq ft) which is double the average size of other properties within Somerset Street and the overall Hillside-Quadra neighbourhood urban settlement boundaries. We are requesting to subdivide and change the property to two R2 zoned lots in order to construct two duplexes. The two new 15 metre-wide lots will complement existing neighbourhood patterns while providing much needed “Missing Middle” housing units. Each home proposed will have a family-oriented and open concept ground floor with three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the second floor.

The subject property is located on the west side of the mid-block of Somerset Street, near the Victoria-Saanich border in the Hillside-Quadra Community Association neighbourhood catchment boundary. The property is located near to the Finlayson Street and Quadra Street collector roads, regional and frequent BC Transit routes, and is near accessible cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. The neighbourhood also provides a series of significant park amenities such as Jackson Street Park, Peacock Hill Park, Summit Park and Topaz Park and Playfields. It is also serviced by major commercial and service nodes located directly between both the Mayfair Shopping Centre to the West and the Hillside Shopping Centre to the East.

Missing Middle Housing is defined in the City of Victoria’s Phase Two Housing Strategy as “ground-oriented housing such as townhouses, houseplexes, duplexes, row houses, lock-off suites, and other housing forms that fit well within neighbourhoods to help increase housing choice, affordability and the achievement of citywide livability and sustainability goals.” This project will offer two modest-sized, ground-oriented duplexes, creating new housing supply while complementing the Hillside-Quadra Local Area Plan. The Hillside-Quadra Local Area Plan, although quite dated, speaks to maintaining traditional neighbourhood character by supporting lots that are “typically 50 feet wide by 120 feet deep (Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Plan, p. 12)”. Our proposal maintains this stated neighbourhood character by subdividing a single 100 foot lot into two while creating additional density to help address the current housing crisis in the City of Victoria. The Neighbourhood Plan also supports “gradual change through infill housing in some circumstances (p. 13).” The Duplex Guidelines, also quite dated,

suggest that lots which are not corner lots should have a width greater than 15 metres and area greater than 670 SM; however newer Neighbourhood Plans (e.g. that of Vic West) do allow for smaller duplex lot sizes.

Both duplexes will be developed to Built Green and BC Energy Step Code 4 construction standards. This standard exceeds the current City of Victoria minimum standards and exceeds all other minimum standards in the Capital Regional District. As part of this application, the developer will be taking steps to ensure that these homes are as close to Net Zero ready as is attainable. The proposed duplexes will employ innovative landscaping measures to ensure that stormwater is effectively managed on-site, employing management tools such as: permeable surfaces; indigenous and drought-resistant planting; rain garden landscaping. At the suggestion of Planning Department staff, we have implemented differentiated paver colours to reduce the visual impact of the driveways and to outline a walkway for pedestrians toward the front entries. The proposed backyard vegetable gardens will, on an individual scale, enhance the overall local and urban food systems in the City of Victoria. Additionally, the project will employ local contractors, sub-contractors, and consultants throughout the planning, design, and construction of these homes wherever possible.

Preliminary neighbour canvassing indicated very good support for the proposal, with a high percentage of adjacent and nearby neighbours signing their support of the application and expressing appreciation for the design and the density changes. Since then, a number of community members have voiced concerns around the possible loss of the two large Garry Oak trees on the property. At the time we submitted the preliminary plans to CALUC, we were not certain about the ability to retain those trees. However, we now have additional information, provided by consulting arborists Talbot McKenzie, assessing the health and viability of retention. One is considered unhealthy with trunk and root collar rot and removal is recommended, and the other is in good condition and located well for tree protection measures. Please see the enclosed information memo from Zebra Design circulated to all neighbours who wrote to us via the Development Tracker webpage, and the Arborist's Tree Protection Plan. We updated the Development Tracker materials to reflect the positive change, on November 27, 2020

We believe that this application presents a neighbourhood-appropriate design and settlement pattern for the Hillside - Quadra community. Compact, family-focused layouts will ensure that this application provides much needed missing middle market housing while elevated BC Energy Step Code standards, Built Green design, Net-Zero targets and stormwater management will minimize the modest development's environmental footprint.

Thank you for your time in consideration of the enclosed materials and we invite you to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Rus Collins

