



June 05, 2021

Mayor Lisa Helps and Councillors
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6

For the past 2 ½ years we have been working with City staff and the community to bring you a proposal that retains and designates this 1899 Samuel McClure home, adds an accessory building to its rear yard and allows construction of 2 new, 2 storey homes on the remaining land.

1 Background

1737 Rockland is an 1899 Samuel McClure home that has been lovingly restored and its original character well maintained. It is the private residence of Earl Large, Founder of Large and Co. – a family owned business in Victoria since 1962.

Earl's home remains a single-family residence - probably one of the few in Rockland that has not been broken into smaller units. It is truly a community treasure which is why, as part of this rezoning process, we are proposing to designate the home as well as the interior foyer and stairwell areas.

Designation can be a difficult decision since heritage designated homes result in significant decreases in market value. Owners are restricted in what they are allowed to do to their home and have an ongoing financial commitment to maintain its heritage standard and quality.

But, because these heritage assets are so important to everyone in the community, these decisions are often made in partnership with the City where additional housing density is granted to support the designation and offset some of the costs.

Our goals for this proposal are to:

- Create a historical landmark for the community.
- Provide more housing knowing there is a crisis at *all* levels of consumption.
- Meet both these goals with a design that positively integrates with the surroundings and is sensitive to neighbours, the community and to the significance of this home.



Front Entrance



Rear View



Foyer and Stairwell

2 Description of Proposal

2.1 Buildings

This magnificent home sits on 2,713 m² (29,202 ft²) of land, high in the top south-west corner facing Rockland Avenue, leaving a large part of the property in the rear 'unused'.

Note: lines are not exact and provided only for context.



Our proposal is to subdivide the land into two parcels. Lot 1 for the existing home would be 921m² (9,913ft²). An accessory building for a gym and storage would be added to the rear of this property. This is needed as the basement is rocky and essentially not useable. Lot 2 would be divided into two strata lots: Lot A being 628m² (6,759ft²) and Lot B being 660m² (7,104ft²). A two storey home would be constructed on each strata lot.

As part of the rezoning process, the existing home, as well as the interior foyer and stairwell would be designated and protected for the community. The home is in excellent condition with only a few exterior repairs and upgrades required. (A *Conservation Plan* is included with our submission).

Through collaboration with City staff, we are able to maintain the character-defining heritage rock wall along the Rockland frontage in its current position and further protect this home's history.

Our proposal honours the beauty and importance of this Samuel McClure home by creating designs that compliment its heritage style, character and scale, but does not detract from its significance. The sloping topography allows the principal residence to be a focal point at Rockland Avenue with the two new homes sited unobtrusively below.

Two storey homes are proposed for several reasons:

- Single storey homes would feel insignificant and diminish the grandeur of the main house.
- The topography allowed for designs and siting that assured privacy for neighbours.
- The lots are large enough to accommodate this size.
- It is the highest and best use of the property, which is a sustainable design approach.



We also took design cues from other developments in the area. For example, right next door to the south (1731 Rockland) there is an older significant home. At some point, their rear property was subdivided and three, multi-storey homes constructed along a new lane - Lyman Duff. This is basically what we are proposing for 1737 Rockland.



2.2 Landscape and Storm Water Management

All off-site trees close to the property line and the mature on-site conifer located just off the north property line near the northeast corner will be retained. Our design team recognize the value of mature trees in terms of wildlife food/habitat, carbon absorption, shade, stormwater management, and beauty and neighbourhood character, and although 7 on-site trees must be removed in the course of development, 27 will be planted (**better than 4:1 ratio**).

Of the 2,713 m² site (including the proposed ROW), approximately 1,035 m², or 38% of the site, comprises planting beds or lawn area, natural stone outcrops that drain to permeable landscape and decorative porous aggregate borders. The porous asphalt driveway which the adjacent concrete walk drains to is approximately 475 m² or 17.5% of the site, meaning that the porous driveway and absorbent landscape alone cover approximately 55.5% of the site.

It should also be noted that approximately 109 m² concrete sidewalk (4% of site), the existing house patios/walkways and the lot 2 patios (collectively approximately 180 m² or 6.6% of the site), all drain to absorbent landscape and have no impact on the storm system. That is an additional 10.6% of the site that benefits from the 55.5% absorbent landscape.

Plant selections reflect a commitment to resiliency, biodiversity, native and adaptive species, seasonal interest, and low maintenance.

3 Community Engagement

Two meetings were held with the Rockland CALUC Executive (May 06, 2020 and June 11, 2020). Comments from the first meeting resulted in a complete redesign of the exterior by Zebra Design Group to ensure the new homes were more complimentary to the heritage aspects of the existing home. The Heritage Consultant has reviewed and approved the designs and color choices.

A meeting was held on Sept 11, 2020 by neighbours on Lyman Duff. We attended and answered questions as required.

Further community input was done through DEV TRACKER under the new COVID protocols set out by the City.

4 City Planning Engagement

Since the original submission, many changes have been made to satisfy City requirements. In discussions with Planning staff, the only sticking point now revolves around privacy for the existing neighbours.

This comes up because our proposal is being vetted against a panhandle zone that asks for single storey where a single storey is meant to address potential privacy issues when building in a panhandle zone. *Note that we are seeking site specific zoning.*

We have addressed this privacy concern and staff have asked we outline this in detail for Council.

1. Lot Sizes for New Homes: A lot size of 850 m² (9,149ft²) is required to subdivide for a panhandle lot. With more than 29,000 ft², we are creating larger, more 'regular' single family lots of 628m² (6,759ft²) and 660m² (7,104ft²). This generates opportunity for optimum siting.
2. Setbacks between Buildings: 7.5m (25') is desirable to ensure privacy to existing neighbours. The distance between our building(s) and neighbours is ample to mitigate any privacy issues ranging from 30' - 65'.
3. Design Modifications: To further assure privacy and mitigate overlooks we made the following design changes:
 - Strata Lot A - reduced upper floor height to 8'.
 - Strata Lot A - removed all upper windows facing south neighbour except bathroom window which is obscured glass.
 - Strata Lot B – minimized bedroom windows on upper floor and all are obscured glass.
 - Both lots – additional landscaping.

5 Government Policies

The OCP is looking to balance the need for new housing and retention of heritage assets. This proposal fully supports this initiative.

Because of Rockland's notable historic architectural and landscape character, the OCP asks us to:

- Support the maintenance of existing dwellings and character through sensitive infill that preserves green space and estate features.
- Continue to conserve the historic architectural and landscape character of the Rockland neighbourhood.
- Encourage a diversity of population and housing in consideration of the Rockland neighbourhood's heritage and estate character.
- Create designs that relate to the land's topography.
- Achieve a high quality of architecture in the design of new dwellings, as well as a high quality of landscape and urban design to enhance the neighbourhood.

The location is ideal being close to goods and services as well as transit which reduces reliance on cars. By including electric car chargers for each home, we are furthering sustainable and climate initiatives.

6 Project Benefits

1. Preservation and designation of an 1899 Samuel McClure historical home and its foyer, as a single-family residence.
2. Responsible use of a large piece of available land to provide additional housing.
3. Building housing in a central, walkable location.
4. Introduction of 27 new trees, over 300 adaptive and native species shrubs and hundreds of adaptive and native species groundcovers and perennials.

7 Green Building

The following features are proposed for this project:

- Retaining and designating the existing heritage home.
- New homes constructed under Step 3 building code requirements.
- Electric car chargers for each new home.
- Permeable driveway.
- Onsite rain water management.
- Native and adaptive vegetation throughout the landscape.
- Rear yard space available for vegetable gardens and fruit trees as desired.
- Water conservation through low flow faucets, showerheads and toilets.

8 Summary

It is a challenge balancing any new development with the values of heritage retention. However, we have fully embraced this challenge with a practical and respectful proposal. Together we have an opportunity to preserve and protect a significant heritage asset for the community, *and* to provide reasonable infill housing in a neighbourhood that values its history and single family character.

Sincerely,

Kim Colpman
Applicant