

Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee
c/o 901 Kings Road
Victoria, BC V8T 1W5

7 December 2021

To Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Re: Proposed Development of 1025 Kings Road

I am writing on behalf of the Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee (NAC) to provide neighbourhood input regarding the above proposed development.

Community Meeting Details

Date: 16 November 2021

Location of meeting: Online – Zoom format

Attending Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee (NAC): 4 members

Keith Davis (Meeting facilitator), Jenny Fraser (Note Taker, CALUC Co-Chair), Rowena Locklin (Zoom Host), Jon Munn (CALUC Co-Chair)

Attending Proponents (Aryze Developments): 4

General Attendance: 5 in notification distance, 1 emailed question/ comments

Community Consultation Process

The proponent, Aryze Developments, held a first formal Community Meeting under the Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC) process on 17 September 2020. After that meeting Aryze made a number of major design changes, which NAC understands were made at the request of the City of Victoria. These design changes include: the loss of one rental unit and one parking stall; increased space for bicycle parking to accommodate up to eight cargo bikes; balconies set back further from the street, the loss of commercial space; and parking access from Kings Road rather than Fifth Street.

Upon learning of the multiple design changes, NAC members enquired if a second formal CALUC Meeting would be required and the local area planner replied that a meeting was necessary. No notice was sent to NAC regarding the need for a second meeting. The second CALUC meeting was held 16 November 2021 (see meeting attendance details above).

Project Overview

A 15-unit rental building currently occupies the site. This building was constructed in the 1950s or 60s and Aryze staff indicated verbally that it needs maintenance and remediation. A public hearing will be required because the proposed density of 2.98 floor space ratio (FSR) is above the Official Community Plan (OCP) limit of 2.5 FSR. The previous proposal had a density of 2.74 FSR. The project will provide secure affordable rental housing, which is considered an amenity to permit additional density. The project

aligns with three of the five applicable objectives of the OCP Large Urban Village designation by providing units for increased population in a mid-rise building, three ground-oriented units (human scaled buildings), and encourages pedestrian and cycling use by providing few amenities for cars and more amenities for bicycles.

A new zone is proposed to replace the existing R3-2 Zone, as the proposal goes beyond many of the existing requirements. The following information (table) was provided by Aryze.

	R3-2 Zone Requirements	Proposed Zone
FSR Maximum	1.6	2.98
Height (storeys)	(6) 22m	(6) 21.24m
Setback [lot line]		
- North/ front	7.5m	1.41m
- South/ rear	7.5m	3.98m
- East/ side	7.5m	1.95m
- West/ side	7.5m	2.68m

The R3-2 Zone indicates a minimum of 30% open space. Aryze indicated that the existing building has a lot coverage of about 70% and the proposed coverage is 81%.

The proponent seeks to replace the existing building with a 56-unit, purpose-built 100 percent rental building. Most of the units (34) would be one-bedroom units designed to meet the needs of single-person households. The building would also include larger two-bedroom (15) and three-bedroom (2) units. Ten percent of the units would rent for below market rates, while the others would rent at rates consistent with the City of Victoria guidelines for affordability.

The proponent identified the project benefits as: secure long-term tenure for renters; the evolution of Quadra Village as a *destination neighbourhood* (unclear definition); an enlivened street and pedestrian experience; and replenishment of dated rental stock. The location of the building close to transit and the AAA (all ages and abilities) cycling route would support a *car-light* (20 motor vehicle parking spots for 56 units) lifestyle.

Building Design

The proposed new development would be a six-storey, wood frame building in a *classic modernist urban* style. One meeting participant suggested that the modern style of the building doesn't reflect the local architectural heritage. He expressed concern that the large white building surfaces would discolour over time due to algal buildup. The proponent indicated that this will not be an issue as exterior materials are smooth; in addition there is an overhang from the roof.

In response to questions from the NAC the proponents provided the following additional information related to the proposed development:

- The estimated population of the project is about 75 people.
- 32 storage units will be provided for the 56 units. It was unclear how storage would be related to units, perhaps rented separately.
- Density. The floor space approaches twice the existing, and there will be nearly four times the number of units.

- A shadow study shows increased shadow cast to the north.
- The open space landscape and usable space will be substantially reduced with reduced setbacks (see above). While there will be limited outdoor space on the site for the use of residents, they will have access to a 2,000 square foot rooftop deck. This south-facing deck will be somewhat intrusive for neighbours as it will open towards downtown and the interior courtyard of adjacent Ross Terrace (2750 Fifth Street).
- All suites will have private balconies of 200 square feet or larger, with top floor balconies in the larger family oriented suites of about 286 square feet (~11'x 26').
- A donation for a local park play space was noted. How this fit as part of an amenity legal agreement was not clear.

Motor Vehicle Parking

The proponent stated that the proposed building would include 20 vehicle parking stalls (including two stalls for disability and car share) for the 56-unit building. As an alternative to private vehicle ownership, building tenants would be offered to a Modo (car share) vehicle parked onsite, as well as a Modo membership for each unit. Tenants would also have access to nearby transit — including the rapid bus lane along Douglas Street (800m/ 12min+ walk) — and the AAA bike network. The 20 parking stalls would be rented on a first come first serve basis, although there would be a process where those living in the larger units would have priority access. Marketing for the building would encourage renters without vehicles. The proponent noted that the relaxation of parking requirements is consistent with the trend — particularly among younger renters — towards reduced vehicle ownership. In addition, the cost of building an underground parkade is not compatible with building affordable rental units.

Meeting participants expressed concern that the proposed development includes 56 units and only 20 motor vehicle parking stalls. Tenants at Ross Terrace, an adjacent Aryze development, 20-30 cars park on the street because the building lacks adequate parking, and this has created tension in the neighbourhood. Neighbours are concerned that the proposed new building at 1025 Kings will generate additional on-street parking competition and discord.

One participant was concerned that the location of the disability parking space would be awkward for access to the elevator.

Electric vehicle charging was briefly discussed. Four plugs for chargers are proposed and other spaces will be *ready* with wiring in place.

The proponent acknowledged the current problems of on-street parking and suggested that over time, as private vehicle ownership decreases, these problems are expected to diminish. NAC representatives recalled previous suggestions that the City of Victoria consider on-street permit parking, an idea that has been rejected.

Bicycle Parking

The proponent indicated that the proposal will include 68 interior bicycle parking spaces for the projected 75 residents, including eight stalls for cargo bikes — as the latter are becoming more widely used. Tenants will have access to bicycle parking through an exterior side door and staircase including runnels for bike wheels.

Meeting participants complained that the adjacent Aryze development at Ross Terrace does not contain adequate bicycle parking; as a result, some tenants are parking their bicycles in stairways or outside the

building. There was discussion regarding the Ross Terrace conversion of many bicycle parking spaces into storage unit space. Meeting participants were concerned that bicycle parking will be similarly inadequate at 1025 Kings Road, as at adjacent 2750 Fifth Street.

One meeting participant noted that more than one person will likely live in some of the units; the building will include 75 bedrooms (including studio apartments). It would therefore be more realistic to base the number of bicycle parking spaces on the number of people in the building (likely more than 75) rather than the number of units.

Landscaping

The landscape design for the building includes trees along the Fifth Street side and plantings that will echo the rainbow highlights on the white and black building. The intent is that plantings will include native species, and plants that are drought-tolerant and attract pollinators. No planting list or plant names were provided. One meeting participant asked which native plants would be used; Aryze promised to provide a list by email, but such information was not provided before this letter was written. The City of Victoria has approved the plant list and selected trees.

The front of the building will present a ‘soft edge’ including benches and bike stands that will provide opportunities for residents to interact with the neighbourhood. Meeting participants asked whether landscaping could include permeable pavers or constructed soil to accommodate foot traffic and trees; the City of Victoria, however, has indicated a preference for planted trees rather than pavers.

Three units in the building will open to the street; other ground floor units will be fenced, based on an assumption of increased security. The building design includes a feature wall that would support art. NAC has suggested that art related to the buried Rock Bay Creek — which used to flow near the site — would be appropriate. The City of Victoria has identified recognition of the creek as desirable.

One meeting participant noted that the landscape plan shows green space directly between the garbage staging area for the building and the street. There is a good chance this green space will be damaged during garbage loading. It might be more effective to create a walkway or permeable paving between the staging area and the street.

One meeting participant suggested that the proposed front setback of 1.41 m along Kings Road would be narrow. This is not consistent with the alleged City of Victoria desire to active and expand public space. In addition with many mobility scooters and pedestrians in Quadra Village it would be desirable to build wider sidewalks. The proponent indicated that the new sidewalk would be closer to the building with a wider boulevard than at present — increasing public space. Aryze indicated the sidewalk will be ~1.5 metres wide and built to City of Victoria design. Concern was expressed that 1.5m is too narrow for a more active street.

Affordability

Meeting participants asked for details with respect to building affordability. The proponent indicated that approximately 90 percent of the units will be ‘affordable’ based on City of Victoria guidelines, and 10 percent would rent for below market rates. Aryze indicated that at this early stage exact rents cannot be established. The building owner would be required to sign a permanent agreement with the City of Victoria regarding rents.

Welfare of Existing Tenants of 1025 Kings Road

Meeting participants expressed concern about the impacts of the proposed development on tenants living in the existing building. The proponents explained in detail their tenant relocation and assistance program. They indicated that tenants in eight out of fifteen units in the existing building have already been rehoused.

Accessibility

The proponents indicated that none of the units will be built to a full disability standard. Aryze staff were unsure if units will be able to be visited by people with disabilities. Aryze said that it is not feasible to build suites that conform to accessibility design guidelines and are also affordable.

General Comments

The concerns raised at the CALUC Meeting included the following, roughly by order of importance: lack of vehicle and bicycle parking (and trust if that proposed would be retained) and resulting conflict between neighbours, density mismatch to services/ design, allocation of parking stalls and storage units, access for people with disabilities, how affordability and amenities are determined and retained over time (type of legal agreement), diminished amount of landscaping/ greenspace, narrow sidewalks, coordination between waste access and landscape, and fit of architectural style.

Sincerely,

Jon Munn
Co-Chair, Community Association Land Use Committee
Hillside Quadra