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ARCHITECTS

29 November 2018

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria

Re: 584 Burnside Rd E | 3020 Douglas St
Rezoning & Development Permit Application

On behalf of our client, the Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS), we are pleased to submit this Rezoning and Development Permit application for 584 Burnside Road East and 3020 Douglas Street.

Our proposal is for a mixed-use six storey residential building fronting Burnside Road East. The project contains a mix of commercial spaces at level 1 and 2 and affordable rental housing above, at levels 2 to 6, with two levels of underground parking below. The current property, which extends from Burnside to Douglas, will be subdivided into two lots and developed in two phases - phase one fronting Burnside Road East and phase two fronting Douglas Street. The application includes a combined rezoning for both phase 1 & 2, and a DP submission for phase 1.

The Site

The site is located within the Douglas Corridor neighbourhood, south of the Toyota dealership and north of Douglas Centre. The context, at the east along Douglas, is predominantly commercial, and at the west, along Burnside, is mostly single family residential. The existing site houses a 3-storey transitional building - the Tally Ho Motel, at the east side, and a surface parking lot at the west side. The property is easily accessible to and from Victoria's downtown core, as well the Uptown node in Saanich. Its unique stance between arterial roads and between major destinations in the CRD has earned it the project name "Crosstown".

Site Analysis and Design

Our proposed design and massing has been formed by planning guidelines set out by the OCP and the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan, feedback from the neighbours, programmatic requirements from the client, and a response to the existing site context.

Our site is located in an area of growth and change, with new developments expected in the foreseeable future; Mayfair Mall being the most recent development to undergo a change. The current local context is a mix of architectural styles defining car dealerships, modest office buildings, motels, multi-story retail & commercial buildings, as well as restaurants and detached houses. The architectural design

vision for this development was to create something purposefully modern, with a strong urban presence that supports commercial viability, and connects individuals with their homes, their neighbours and their community. This vision is achieved through a diverse collection of building forms that define public, semi-private and private sun-filled landscapes, bringing spirit and vitality to the site. This exciting approach helps invigorate the Burnside/Douglas corridor and leads the charge to inspire future developments in the area.

The organization of the site began with a desire to maximize space for pedestrians and meaningful green landscapes within the development, a much-needed feature in the neighbourhood. The orientation of the site relative to the sun path informed the design, with the primary outdoor spaces, pedestrian pathways, commercial & residential entrances and elevated outdoor spaces oriented towards the south. This allowed a shift of the access to the underground parking to the north of the site, adjacent to the blank wall of the existing neighbouring building. To improve the viability of the commercial spaces at the ground level, fourteen short-term surface parking stalls were added along the south side, integrated into the larger paving patterns to minimize visual impacts and extend the functionality of the plaza. Other site constraints and challenges that informed our design include the significant 7m grade differential between Burnside and Douglas St and the two adjacent buildings located on the property lines at the north and south sides of the site.

Building Design

The desire to create a vibrant and safe community-oriented plaza at the ground level helped shape the building form. Past the pedestrian entry at Burnside, the building opens up to allow for a larger gathering space within the development. The rental housing and commercial lobbies all spill out onto the tree-adorned plaza, connecting residents, café, work-live units, commercial tenants and daycare facilities. A series of private outdoor spaces are provided within the development: two residential rooftop patio spaces (at level 2 and level 5) and a daycare outdoor play-space at level 2.

The architecture of the development is contemporary in its form, detail and materiality. Three architectural elements have been used to express the building design: the frame, the core and the gap. This concept has been used to create a finely-crafted composition of forms, materials and openings. The building is composed of three distinct yet unified parts: the street front, the connecting ribbon, and the mid-block. The higher density, L-shaped mid-block has been divided into two linear forms, each articulated with a gap reveal, and shift in plane & height. The assembly of these varying 'parts', distinct in height and orientation, purposefully respond to the scale of the immediate neighbours; provide for privacy, security and access to views and landscapes; and enhance the skyline articulation of the development, reducing the perceived mass of the building.

The facades introduce some playful movement in the window placements, shifting slightly from floor-to-floor, creating a tapestry of light and colour within an underlying rhythmic order. Some windows are recessed within inverted bays, typically angled to one side, biased to the orientation of the sun to maximize access to morning daylight, shade from lower western sun or add privacy between adjacent suites. Deeper recesses in the façade contain juliette balconies, marking the scale of residential units and providing improved access to fresh air and views.

Materials

The material palette further reinforces the notion of the three architectural elements: The 'frames' are white fibre cement panels, with the 'core' as a warm wood-like material and the 'gaps' as charcoal fibre cement or metal panel. The placement of materials contributes to reducing the perceived mass of the building: the warm material along Burnside is limited to three stories, nestled between the glazed commercial ground floor, and the upper storey is recessed and clad in grey metal panel. A glazed lobby screened with greenery extends the full height of the street block facing the plaza, accentuated with a connecting roof form that represents an urban scale gesture signifying the mixed-use component of this development within the community.

Height

The OCP & BGNP have designated a height of 6 stories for the site. However, in response to the single-family homes across the street along Burnside Road East, we limited the height of the 'street block' to five stories at this frontage. Furthermore, the fifth floor is set back, to reduce the apparent mass of the building along this frontage. The 'connecting ribbon' is four storeys in height with an upper common room on the fifth floor, stepped back to promote access to daylight and provide exterior residential amenity space. The eastern 'mid-block' rises up to six stories in the center of the site to achieve the allowable density for the development.

Due to the sloping site, the underground parking is exposed above grade only at the far eastern side of phase 1 and level with the ground floor of the phase 2 development. We envision a green wall and a landscape buffer at the west side of Phase 2 to animate the wall of the parkade.

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design):

Safety has been at the forefront of our design concerns throughout the development of the project. Our goal has always been to create open spaces that are generous, well-lit and comfortable for safe passage, with overlook from residential suites. The trees at the plaza will be pruned to have a high canopy to help maintain clear visibility throughout the public space. The various uses within the development also help to increase safety: retail and commercial space tenants and patrons, daycare users,

and residents will be travelling through the plaza at various times throughout the day, all of whom will increase the amount and frequency of "eyes on the street". The phase 2 development will accommodate an accessible pedestrian through-connection to Douglas Street.

Sustainable Features

To align with the funding requirements of BC Housing, our design will meet the BC Energy Code Step 3 (for part 3 buildings) in all residential areas, and BC Energy Code Step 2 for all non-residential (commercial) areas. Full-building energy modelling will be conducted by a third-party energy modelling consultant to ensure the building's energy efficient systems work in tandem to achieve the Step Code requirements. These sustainable features will include:

- Exterior insulation and reduction in thermal bridging
- High performance double-glazed window system
- High efficiency mechanical heating and cooling systems, including heat recovery technologies
- Energy Star appliances and low-flow fixtures
- A green plaza with on-site, slow release storm water retention
- A central, walkable location - within close access to public transportation
- Increasing housing affordability
- Increasing density

Parking

The development exceeds the requirements for car parking and meets the requirements for bicycle storage as outlined in the City of Victoria Schedule C document. We have provided 141 car stalls (135 required) and 204 bike stalls (186 class 1 and 18 class 2). 14 are located at the plaza level at the south of the site for the convenience of visitors accessing the commercial spaces.

To ensure the viability of the commercial spaces, a commercial loading bay has been provided at the north west of the site, accessed from Burnside Rd E or Douglas St. This loading bay will serve the commercial retail units fronting Burnside Road, as well as the commercial office space located mid-building on the ground floor. We envision a separate loading bay for the future second phase of development (fronting Douglas Street) will be accommodated when design of the second phase begins (Phase 2 design is not included as part of this DP application).

Garbage and recycling for all residential and commercial uses have been located in the underground parkade, which can be accessed from either Burnside Rd E or Douglas St. The parkade height has been appropriately sized to ensure garbage and recycling removal vehicles can access the parkade thru-road.

Conclusion

We believe that this proposal's design represents an exciting and appropriate, response to City of Victoria's planning objectives for the Douglas Corridor and the Burnside neighbourhood, as outlined in both the Official Community Plan and the Burnside Gorge Community Plan. It serves as a becoming and attractive transition and buffer from the vast expanse of paving and commercial spaces to the north and east, and the quiet single-family neighbourhood to the west. It makes an important contribution to housing diversity and affordability in the municipality, located in an area that is well able to sustain it. It also introduces some much needed green space to the neighbourhood, which will be open for the greater public to enjoy alongside residents and patrons of the development.

We feel the project's strengths, as outlined above, will be valued by Staff and Council when giving this application your thoughtful consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with Council, Committees, and Staff to ensure that the project is supportable and a benefit to the community.

Sincerely,
Low Hammond Rowe Architects Inc

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hammond', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Hammond, Architect AIBC, MRAIC, CPHD
Principal