

Friday, May 8, 2020

Mayor Alto & Council
City of Victoria
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Re: Application for Rezoning and Development Permit, 1055 Alston Street

Dear Mayor Alto and Council,

We are pleased to submit this letter on behalf of the project's developer, Reyes Holdings Corp., to accompany their Application for Rezoning and Development Permit for the above-noted property.

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to develop the property with a mixed-use (industrial and residential) building. The site has two frontages (Alston Street and Tyee Road) and the elevation difference between the two is significant. That is, the elevation of Tyee Road is as much as 10m below that of Alston Street. The topography of the site presents unique challenges and opportunities.

Rather than develop the property under the existing zone (M2-S) with a predominantly industrial building and a very limited residential component, a new zone is contemplated which would allow for a predominantly residential building over a light industrial component. The contemplated density (2.28 : 1) is below that permitted (3:1) under the existing zone, the height is in keeping with the current zone (15m) as are the setbacks (3m). The proposal meets many of the goals and objectives of the Employment-Residential designation within Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP).

- Proposed Uses: A residential building with Light Industrial space(s) accessed from Tyee Rd.
- Proposed Building Height: 15.90m and 5 storeys
- Proposed Setbacks:

Front Yard / West / Alston	4.14 m
Rear Yard / East / Tyee	2.47 m
Side Yard / North	4.05 m
Side Yard / South	3.46 m



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- Proposed Floor Space Ratio (Lot Area = 1,406m²): FSR = 2.28
- Type of Tenure Provided: Strata ownership
- Proposed Dwelling Units: 56 Units
- Proposed Unit Types:
 - 1-Bedroom (32m² Avg) - 40 Units
 - 2-Bedroom (75m² Avg) - 16 Units
- Parking stalls required: 62 stalls (60 + 2 accessible)
- Parking stalls provided: 19 stalls (17 + 2 accessible)
- Bicycle Parking required and provided: 60 long-term spaces, 6 short-term spaces

Government Policies

1055 Alston Street is located in Victoria West within the Employment-Residential Designation of the OCP. The development proposal aligns with Victoria's OCP values by ensuring an increase to the housing stock, a strengthening of social resources, and the reinforcement of Victoria vibrancy through contemporary design and collaboration with city planners and community stakeholders.

The Employment-Residential Designation defines building forms of mixed-use buildings of approximately 5 storeys in height, with commercial/light industrial at ground level with residences above. With rising population growth and residents of Victoria looking for places to live and work, the proposed project for 1055 Alston Street will help to satisfy the burgeoning demand for low-medium residential densities within Victoria and create work opportunities.

Project Benefits and Amenities

Project benefits of this development will include an increase in the urban housing stock and the retention of industrial land within the Employment-Residential Designation, streetscape upgrades to meet the transportation and pedestrian mobility requirements within the OCP and new light industrial opportunities to better integrate and flourish with the local urban fabric.

Helping to accommodate the anticipated growth and density that the City of Victoria is projecting for the future allows the Victoria West Neighbourhood to benefit from an increase in the variety of new residential housing stock.

Streetscape upgrades will be included to ensure continuous accessible design across the frontage as well as to meet Victoria's OCP and Victoria's Pedestrian Master Plan strategies. Commercial units at grade on Tyee Road are proposed to better engage the local community and provide for long-term viable employment opportunities within the community.



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Need and Demand

Development of the site is required to better reflect the growing urban landscape of Victoria. Aligning with the OCP, the proposed mixed-use building will serve the needs of residents and the community for living and working opportunities.

Planning guidelines and local demand will be met by providing a medium-density project, expanding local industrial spaces, improving the vitality and livability of the public realm and offering a well-designed and contemporary built form within the Victoria West neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood

1055 Alston Street is located near the north end of Alston Street, south of Raynor Avenue. Previously used for automotive service, the brownfield site will be environmentally remediated as part of the proposed development. North and south of the site are commercial properties similarly zoned (e.g., light industrial), while to the west are residential properties and to the east is the multi-family Railyards development.

The existing site warrants development based upon the dynamic status of the neighbourhood and the need to densify and improve the current streetscape and pedestrian realm. The proposed development will relate to the local neighbourhood by representing the visions and goals of the Neighbourhood Plan and OCP. A brownfield site will be re-invigorated with contemporary architecture and valuable employment space.

City Staff and Community Consultation

The Developer has engaged with City staff who have been supportive of the project and collegial in assisting the development team in working through both functional building issues and the design aesthetic. Given the topography of the site, challenges exist. We are pleased that we have been able to maintain the initial

design concept, while incorporating many of the functional necessities of such a building.

The Victoria West CALUC has been informally engaged and will be formally consulted on April 18, 2023. Efforts from all stakeholders early in the process have generated an elegant building that is functional and community-focused.



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Impacts

By engaging with the ground-orientated commercial units, benefiting from the increase in dwelling units for the area and enjoying the contemporary streetscape and building design, the local community will experience a positive impact from the development. Neighbouring properties will experience an increase in activity and use and benefit from the positive impact to local commercial businesses.

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

The proposed development meets the stated purpose of revitalizing the area through residential development and maintaining a diversity of employment lands and uses. The proposal complies with the OCP guidelines and helps to revitalize and animate the area, enhancing appearance through high quality architecture responsive to the context and enhancing the pedestrian experience through human scale urban design, compatible with street function.

Building Design

The building's mass is composed of two distinct elements: a ground level commercial base accessed from Tyee Road, which is essentially invisible from Alston, and a four-storey residential component which is accessed from Alston Street. An interstitial layer of parking separates the two distinct components, cantilevering beyond the commercial space below and thereby proving interest to the Tyee elevation and better aligning with the design guideline prescribing ground-oriented buildings set close to the sidewalk having light industrial uses at ground level and residences above.

Our proposal is aligned physically and aesthetically with the Railyards development directly adjacent and the existing commercial /industrial buildings on the West side of Tyee Road.

The building is comprised of a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom homes. All homes are efficient and relatively small, allowing for attractive pricing. They have been designed as entry-level condominiums and will be marketed primarily to those looking to get into the increasingly unaffordable Victoria real estate market. Over the past decades we have developed multiple entry-level condominium buildings of a similar nature. We have helped countless people (primarily young, first-time buyers) get into the local market and realize the equity growth associated with home ownership. Our hope is to do so again with this building.



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The design is intended to maximize efficiency in all areas - design layout, structural components, energy utilization - while maintaining a high standard for quality and durability of materials, site works and landscape treatments, and amenity areas for residents. The exterior materials are a combination of corrugated and flat metal panels with different variations in colour and orientation providing a layered appearance of primary and secondary elements on the building façades that will change with the tracking of the sun across the building. The palate of materials is consistent with the design aesthetic used extensively in the Railyards development and will link the new development to the existing community aesthetic.

The main entrance from Alston is highlighted with a bright red metal panel colour scheme that is carried through the building elevations as vertical panels between randomly located window pairs.

The semi-recessed parking structure has metal mesh panels covering openings in the concrete structure that will provide a green-screen effect as the extensive landscaping matures, screening views into the parkade from the street and adjacent properties.

Atop the main entrance lobby there is an extensive rooftop amenity area accessed from the 2nd floor common corridor with outdoor gathering spaces and landscaping treatments. The south facing units on level 1 will enjoy walk-out private patio areas and additional landscape treatments directly form their living areas.

The Industrial space on Tye has an attractive and open storefront appearance with extensive glazing to bring natural light into the spaces, limited surface parking, and planter-box screening to the street frontage.



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Transportation

1055 Alston Street is located approximately one block from the arterial of Bay Street. While we do not meet the Schedule C requirements for 62 vehicle parking stalls we have provided sufficient vehicle parking so that all 2-bedroom, and some 1-bedroom, homes could have a parking stall.

The project does comply with requirements of the current Zoning Bylaw Schedule C-Off-Street Parking requirements for bicycles. Bicycle parking will be within a safe and secure facility, located at street level, making it easily accessible. Increased bicycle usage by residents will be further facilitated through proximity to existing and future network of Greenways, including the Galloping Goose one block away and the Skinner Street bike lanes at our front door. Located close to an arterial, public transportation opportunities are frequent. Although public transportation is convenient, it is our hope that the primary modes of transportation for the future residents of the building will be foot and bike (given the proximity to path networks).

In summary, we believe this proposal offers significant benefits to residents of Victoria in terms of quality, livability and moderately-priced accommodation. We also believe that, in its present form the project will, through its strong design and retention of industrial land make a significant contribution to the city's evolving urban fabric. An environmentally-contaminated site will be remediated and provide both employment and residential opportunities to Victoria.

Yours truly,
dHKarchitects

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Charles R. Kierulf', written in a cursive style.

For
Reyes Holdings Corp.
Owner