



Letter to Mayor and Council

Purpose:

The following sets out the proponent's response to the Small Lot Subdivision Guidelines, and is provided to assist Mayor and Council in their consideration of the rezoning application to create one small lot (R1-S2) while retaining the parent property's R2 (Duplex) zoning, on a site where currently one single family house zoned (R2, Duplex) exists.

Government Policies:

The existing home at 2695 Capital Heights is in a neighbourhood where the adjacent dwellings include single family homes, duplexes, two existing small lot homes and a multi-purpose subsidized housing complex (The Cridge Centre). The proposal to create a R1-S2 small lot, while retaining the existing R-2 (Duplex) zoning of the parent/donor parcel known as 2695 Capital Heights is representative of the goals outlined in the official community plan. This proposal meets all of the City's requirements from the Engineering and the Greenway/ Parks perspectives. After receiving feedback from the various City of Victoria Departments involved in the small lot rezoning application process, it has been determined one setback variance would be required for the retention of the R2 (Duplex) zoning of the parent property. The required variance would be for a rear yard set back. This variance is required due to the siting of the existing structure and the determination of what is the front yard by the city of Victoria. The parent property's actual address is 2695 Capital Heights, however the front entrance to the home and the front façade of the house is facing Kings Rd. Two small lot subdivision homes are located directly across the street (1254 and 1256 Kings Rd.) from the proposed development and there are several other examples of successful small lot subdivisions in the area.

Relevant Experience:

I am a local builder, living in the Oaklands catchment area with my family. I have completed two similar small lot subdivisions in the Oaklands catchment area. One on the corner of Doncaster Dr. and Burton Ave. where the feedback from the community regarding the finished product was very positive, and the other on Cedar Hill Rd. near Hillside Ave. which is actively under construction.

Neighbourhood feedback:

The petition in which the adjacent neighbours were polled for their support or lack of support for the proposal has been completed (20 in support and 1 in opposition). The response has been almost entirely positive. Provided in the proposed set of plans is an aerial view outlining the support for the proposal. The support for the project is unanimous with the exception of the owner of 2689 Capital Heights who refuses to discuss his concerns around the project with the proponent and was unwilling to sign the petition. The owner of 2689 Capital Heights did however contact the planning department, noting his concerns and opposition to the project. The proponent contacted the planning department who shared

the concerns of the owner of the property. The proponent made one additional attempt to communicate with the owner of 2689 Capital Heights and it was made clear there was no interest in further discussion. The proponent has attempted to implement changes reflecting the concerns of the neighbor (passed on from the planning Dept.), namely increasing the size of the rear yard from what was originally proposed. The owner of 2689 Capital Heights did not attend the CALUC meeting on Oct. 25th.

Extensive consultation with the adjacent neighbours and several nearby but not adjacent neighbours did reveal there is strong objections to the city of Victoria's (Engineering Dept.) desire to develop the frontage of the property with sidewalks. The majority of the properties in Kings Rd. area have undeveloped frontage and the undeveloped nature of the area is a feature prized by the residents of the neighbourhood. At the CALUC meeting there was strong support for the project. During the CALUC meeting many of the attendees again voiced strong opposition to the possibility of developing the frontage of the property. The general desire of the local community is that the frontage remain undeveloped, the rationale being the undeveloped frontage in our area is unique and highly desirable providing a rarely seen rural feel in our community. It is the proponents hope that the city of Victoria is willing to work with the neighbourhood stake holders and find a compromise that considers the feedback from the community.

Project Benefits:

The creation of a new R1-S2 small lot will provide much needed density in a manner which will have minimal impact on the neighbourhood. By approving the R1-S2 lot and retaining the R2 (Duplex) zoning of the parent property an additional dwelling can be created in the future through development of a duplex structure on the parent property. From an economic perspective, the project will create numerous construction jobs from all areas related to the construction of the proposed home. The additional lot will provide new property tax revenue. The proposed new home will greatly increase the aesthetic appeal of the neighbourhood by providing a new contemporary home where currently a detached two car garage that is essentially unused and in poor condition sits. Additionally, improved landscaping will increase the visual appeal of the surrounding area.

Need and Demand:

The creation of the new R1-S2 small lot while retaining the donor properties R2 (Duplex) zoning will ultimately allow for three single family dwellings where formerly only one dwelling existed. The property (2695 Capital Heights) located on the corner of Capital Heights and Kings Rd. is large enough to easily exceed the 260 square meter minimum (the proposed site size is 306.5 square meters) requirement for a small lot while still meeting the 555 square meter minimum to retain its R2 (Duplex) zoning. This will provide much needed density at a minimal impact to the community..

Services:

The subject property is located within walking distance of the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, numerous children's parks, schools, Cedar Hill Golf Course, and Hillside Mall. The mall offers grocery shopping, dental service, numerous boutiques, insurance services, restaurants, and several major department stores. As a result potential occupants can have virtually any daily need accommodated simply by walking a few blocks to the mall. The effect of this is virtually no commuting for day to day requirements. In addition, the lots are within a block of Hillside Avenue with its extensive transit services.

Neighbourhood:

The existing house at 2695 Capital Heights has a dilapidated two car garage occupying the site of the proposed R1-S2 small lot. Nearly all of the adjacent neighbours are supportive of the proposed design and layout of the development. The consensus at the community (CALUC) meeting was also supportive of the proposal's design and layout.

Impacts:

This small lot subdivision will make considerable improvements to the neighbourhood. The creation of the new home will improve the streetscape and the implementation of effective landscaping will dramatically improve the site from its current state. Upon consulting the Parks Division of the City of Victoria, we learned there is a protected tree on the property. After discussion with Brook Daital (City of Victoria Parks Dept.) and consultation with Talbot Mackenzie & Associates (certified ISA arborists), it has been determined that a Dogwood tree will have to be removed. Talbot Mackenzie & Associates have found the tree to be in declining health with dieback and indications of canker in the crown (as described in the tree report, Dogwood number 954). Recently Jane Waters who is now the key tree contact for the city of Victoria parks division made a site visit to the proponents property. Shortly after, several welcomed and creative suggestions were made around minimizing impacts on the trees for this project. All of the suggestions were incorporated into the proponents landscaping plan.

The largest impact of concern to the community is the City of Victoria's (Engineering Dept) desire to develop the frontage of the property as outlined under Neighbourhood Feedback.

At one point in the application process it was noted by engineering that the parking proposal for the parent property (existing home) was not supported by the engineering department. After a meeting with area planner Michael Angrove the proponent believes the issue has been resolved by relocating the off street parking space.

Other possible impacts on neighbouring properties are construction noise during the building process, and occasional deliveries during the construction process.

Design:

The design of houses in the Oaklands catchment area is eclectic and varied. We have chosen a design with elements that can be found in nearby homes and taken particular care to select finishes that are complementary to and reflective of homes on our street. The contemporary design fits well within the context of the adjacent properties. The neighbourhood response to the proposed design and the materials selection was very positive.