



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 5276, Station B, Victoria BC, V8R 6N4

Land Use Committee

rockland.bc.ca

January 21, 2022

Re: CALUC Community Meeting 522 St. Charles Street CLC00368

The Proposal

The Proponents are proposing to subdivide the subject property into two lots, and build a new house in the newly created lot. Specifically, it seeks to turn an existing R1-A zoned lot into two smaller lots, zoned R1-A Modified and R1-B (with variances).

The Proponents have offered to add the existing house to the City's Heritage Register.

The Proponent has indicated that the existing rental accommodation in the existing building will be retained, and the new house will be for accessible family accommodation. However, the Proponent did not offer long-term commitments to these items.

The CALUC Meeting

The CALUC Community Meeting was attended by 5 CALUC members, 2 proponents, 2 designers, 2 identified neighbors and 2 unidentified participants.

This relatively low turnout may reflect the difficulties in accessing a Zoom format meeting rather than an indication that people were not interested in the proposal. We did receive complaints about the notification sent by the City to neighbours within 100m, indicating that the long, random-digit Zoom link was difficult to copy to a browser. Subsequent to the meeting, we received emails and phone calls from impacted neighbours seeking clarification of the proposal and expressing concerns about parking, heritage retention and loss of the large lot characteristics of Rockland.

Key Issues

The key issues identified by neighbours and community members during the CALUC meeting and subsequent communication via the City includes:

1. Zoning Comparison

First, it should be noted that the subject property is currently zoned R1-A. However, the proposal identifies the proposed variances against R1-B zoning instead of R1-A zoning. The differences can be significant, and can be misleading in terms of the variances being sought relative to the existing zoning of the subject property (as opposed to the proposed zoning).

For example, Lot A (the lot for the new house) identifies just one variance: a lot width of 14.24m relative to the R1-B lot width requirement of 15m (a relatively minor 0.76m variance). However, this approach does not provide a reference to the existing R1-A zoning, which for lot width is 24.0m (and therefore a fairly significant 9.76m variance). In addition, Lot B (the lot for the existing house) would be left with a 19.87m lot width, also below the existing R1-A lot width requirement of 24.0m.

Beyond this example it is not clear what variances are being sought relative to the existing R1-A zoning. The Proponent should clarify this element in its proposal to the City. In addition, all subsequent comments should be reconsidered within this zoning context.

2. Lot Width

As per the example presented above, the Proponent has indicated that for Lot A (the lot for the new house) only the lot width doesn't meet the zoning, although as noted above that is relative to the proposed R1-B with Variance zoning as opposed to the existing R1-A zoning. The proposal identifies a variance of 0.76m against the (R1-B) zoning requirement of 15.0m.

It is also noted that the lot width for Lot B (the lot for the existing house) would be reduced to 19.87m, which is less than the R1-A zoning requirement of 24.0m

3. Setback & Siting

The primary issued raised by the neighbors was the reduced setback between the proposed residence and the existing home on the lot, as well as its siting on the lot. For example:

Comment from Rein Rungus, 582 St. Charles:

What is the location on the property?

Response from Louis Hovat/Zebra Design:

The house is positioned forward of the existing residence and parallel to the front face of the home immediately adjacent to the South. An overlay has been created which indicates there is one window with a clear view into the neighbors.

There is a concern that Rockland is losing the Large Lot Characteristics of historic Rockland as outlined in the Neighborhood Plan. This positioning has a greatly reduced setback from the 25% of lot depth required in the current R1-A zoning. However, there is an acknowledgement that in the push for densification, compromise may be needed.

4. Other

There were additional concerns submitted to the city, proponents and CALUC on the project regarding street parking, impact to local traffic and tree pruning on the south side of the property.

Closing

In closing, we wish to emphasize that a property rezoning is a privilege, not a right. The creation of an additional lot out of this property is a significant benefit to the Proponent, and there will be impacts to the neighbours and neighbourhood as described above. It is our hope that the proposal is evaluated on the balance of reasonably meeting the needs of the Proponent, while also clearly addressing the impacts it could have to the City, the neighbourhood, and the neighbours.

Best regards,

Bob June, LUC Chair

Dave McWalter, LUC

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