



**North Park Neighbourhood Association
Community Land Use Meeting
Nov. 22, 2018, 7 p.m.
2220 Cook Street**

MINUTES

PROPONENT:

- Garde Collins, Linhar Projects

ARCHITECT:

- Christine Lintott

ATTENDANCE:

- Approximately a dozen residents from North Park attended, including adjacent neighbours to 2220 Cook Street.
- Partners in the proposed development were also in attendance.

OPENING REMARKS

Garde Collins

Our proposal is to subdivide the existing R2 lot at 2220 Cook St. into two lots. We would retain the existing apartment on the northerly lot and develop a triplex on the southerly lot. We will be applying for rezoning for the land plus a Development Permit with Variance for the southerly lot.

The City of Victoria’s OCP encourages higher density than a duplex on an R2 lot on an arterial road such as Cook Street. The City would like higher density that maximizes the lot—for example, a 3-storey multi-unit building. We intend to keep the existing house and add a building next to it. It’s a better fit for the neighbourhood.

The current house at the corner of Cook and Queens streets is leased by VIHA, and used to house people with housing challenges. We intend to keep VIHA as a tenant.

The garage on the southerly lot is currently used for storage. This is where we would develop the triplex. The building will be similar in height to the existing building.

The triplex will be a side-by-side duplex with two 2-bedroom/2 bath units on the main floor in a mirror image. The entrances will face the street. Upstairs will be the third 2-bedroom 2 bath suite. The triplex will have a bike lockup room and guest bike racks at front.

The City wants to remove the existing driveway with access onto Cook St. We're proposing a driveway off Queens St., with access to the back of the new building. That will remove parking from Queens Ave. and allow for more parking on Cook St. The Modo carshare would love to have a parking spot in this location so our proposal includes 1 stall for community carshare parking. The next closest carshare spot is in Fernwood. The new triplex would also have 2 parking stalls.

The City has a 5-metre statutory right-of-way (SRW) along Cook St. to accommodate future road widening. Therefore, buildings on the lot needs to be set back 5 metres. The existing building does not comply with the SRW as is but they will allow us to keep the building.

The original building will not be changed under our proposal. We want to retain the 8 suites and are not intending to change it in the future. However, if it was damaged (for example, by fire) in the future, it would need to be rebuilt with greater setbacks from Cook St. We would need new zoning to rebuild a rooming house in the future, so we're applying for that as part of this project. Plans have also been drawn to rebuild the 8-suite building, if it needs to be replaced in the future. It would be 3 stories and moved back on the lot 2 feet, removing the porch.

Similar R2 rooming houses in the City that have had fires cannot be rebuilt as rooming houses because of zoning restrictions. Houses are now sitting empty as they can't be rebuilt on the same footprint.

VIHA would have the first right of refusal in the future if we sell the property.

QUESTION PERIOD

Do any of the new units meet the definition of affordability?

The City has just come out with a new policy. We're considering how we can fit into that. In future the existing building would be registered as 8 units (5 rooms and 3 suites) and would be affordable. We would have to go back to apply for rezoning if VIHA ever leaves this building. The rezoning would apply only to the land.

Are the 8 units required to be affordable?

It's a bit in flux. The definitions are changing. The City will want us to come in to talk about how we can make that work – we still have to have that conversation.

Bike storage is great, but new owners in the triplex are all going to drive. Is this enough parking?

Two spots for the triplex are not enough.

There are also 3 spots for the existing building.

What's required for parking and what are you providing?

The requirements range from 1 to 1.45 parking stalls per unit. If you provide a carshare space, as we've proposed, variances are available. The City requires 2 spaces for the existing building and 4 for the new triplex. We're providing 2 spaces for the triplex plus a new carshare space. That makes 5 total spaces, plus additional parking space along Cook St.

Is the proposed driveway narrower than usual?

No, it's 3 metres. It's standard. It takes away the back yard from the existing property.

Are you allowed to put the cars next to the house on Queens?

We have to provide screening. We'll have to see what the City says.

Will the new property be strata-titled and sold with a parking variance? There's not enough parking for 3 independently owned 2-bedroom units. (This issue was mentioned repeatedly.)

Yes, we'll have to have some kind of variance. This isn't as bad as some areas in terms of the pressures on parking. The kind of people who buy places typically judge how much space they need and buy what they need. For the City the parking is a lower denominator than affordable housing.

What other designs did you consider? We have condos on Pembroke with parking at the back.

The property isn't deep enough to do that on this property. If parking is restricted, buyers will be restricted to people who have one car. It isn't worth it for a developer to build just a duplex or a Single Family Dwelling.

I think it's inevitable that we'll end up with more density living downtown and it's the way things are going.

NPNA Chair's comment:

We're always talking about preserving more affordable housing. Preserving the 8-unit building is a huge bonus. The MODO spot is a significant contribution.

What other designs have you considered?

Originally we were going to move a house from Pembroke St. to the garage property but that didn't work out. Moving the other house was the only other plan we had.

I'm curious if other designs were generated for entire property – other combinations of suites etc.

To do more units it would all need to be rental, and we aren't in a position to do that.

Were partnerships with VIHA or CMHC for affordable housing considered?

No, we've already got the 8 units for affordable units. There isn't the space on the lot to put a lot of units on this property.

I would have liked to have seen alternate design options, that included putting parking underground etc.

Underground on this site is all rock.

I would have liked to have seen the property explored for other designs and partnership opportunities.

We can't do anything more affordable than what's currently there.

What best practices in heritage infill have you applied to come up with this design?

Are you trying to mimic heritage? We suffer from less than optimal urban design because the City doesn't have a heritage infill policy. Did you explore other designs for the property and how does it meet best practices?

When we do heritage restoration work we use beautiful millwork. We can't use wood on two sides of this new building due to fire regulations. The materials have a big impact on what you see. We have limited space here so there is only so much we can do.

How did you arrive at the two-column mirror design?

The two units mirror each other, and the doors must face the street. We've accomplished what the City requires, and people don't want their doors facing each other.

The roof pitch follows the roof pitch of the existing building. It also mimics the hip roof of the neighbouring building.

Are the box bays a characteristic of heritage houses?

We are trying to balance functional needs with nods to the heritage of area. We're not calling it a heritage infill. The existing (VIHA) building is rough. It's not really a heritage building.

Do you have an urban design person?

We've won heritage restoration awards, and architect Christine Lintott has as well. We thought this design suited the project best of all those we considered. The colours came from the building project at 1110 Pembroke Street. We have done restoration projects, such as at 864 Queens.

The windows on the south side look directly at our bedroom and living room area, and the window size concerns me. We're concerned about privacy. (Comment from immediate neighbours to south)

We'll consider that in the design. The windows won't be lined up directly across from your windows.

Will any units be accessible?

There may be room for a ramp, and we'll look at that.

Will you be doing any exterior improvements to the existing building? It would be nice to see some sprucing up of this building.

We'll be painting it. We put a new roof on this year. We've talked about making the upstairs more accessible for stretcher access, which would require some redoing to the back of the house. The colours in the design have been taken from a large heritage building on Wark St.

Is there a landscaping plan or any screening planned?

The neighbour behind on Queens has a 12-foot hedge so we thought that was adequate. There are plans for native plantings between buildings.

In your other projects did the City require a lot of changes? Are you expecting this to flow fairly easily?

The new Council is interested in affordable housing. Where they come from and what they come back with may change things at the time of application.

What is your break-ground goal?

The City is backed up with large applications. There are a number of stages in the application process. Our Pembroke property took 2 years. It's hard to say.