

822 Catherine Street
Letter to Mayor & Council

822 Catherine Street

Development Permit with Variance

ARYZE

14 July 2023

City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 1P6

RE: Development Permit with Variance

Dear Mayor Alto, Council and Staff:

We are submitting the enclosed Development Permit Application for 822 Catherine St to deliver 27 much needed purpose-built rental homes for the Vic West neighbourhood. This application builds on the work completed over the last two years to Rezone the land for a mixed-use development and further responds to feedback we heard from Staff, Council and the community with the original application.

On May 12, 2022 Council approved Rezoning Application no. 00782 and Development Permit Application with Variances no. 00173. That application was for 31 purpose-built rental homes and two commercial units which together add to the vitality, vibrancy and village-feel of the Catherine Street Small Urban Village.

Variances included:

1. Reduced front yard setback from 3.0m to 1.5m on first storey and 0 on upper storeys
2. Reduced rear yard setback from 6.0m to 2.3m
3. Increased height from 3 storeys to 3.5 storeys
4. Reduced residential vehicle parking from 30 stalls to 10 stalls
5. Reduced commercial vehicle parking from 6 stalls to 0 stalls

Since this application was approved, further work on tendering and constructability has been completed, but the reality is that the Rezoning and Development Permit stages are just one step in a long process of ensuring that projects are viable to bring to market. We have worked diligently on detailed construction costing to determine how the project could be delivered using current lending terms for construction financing, but since September 2019, market conditions have continued to shift dramatically and the Bank of Canada has increased the base interest rate by 3.25%. Unfortunately this has a direct impact on the viability of delivering the project as it is currently proposed and has left us in the position where current design and project assumptions cannot be advanced. The project team is

still fully committed to delivering rental homes on this site in line with the City's adopted policies and we have therefore worked hard to revise the original proposal in a manner that builds on and improves the original building design.

We are proposing an alternate design that:

1. Meets the zoning and development permit variances granted in the previous application
2. Maintains the key architectural design intent from the approved design
3. Improves upon, where possible, the major feedback we received regarding the western setback from the previous design review. This also includes the relocation of the communal amenity space
4. Has received preliminary review feedback from staff and has helped guide the proposed building design

The design has adhered to the intent of the approved application in the following ways:

- **Setbacks**

The setbacks along Langford and Bella have remained the same as the approved application. Along the West property line, the setback above level 01 has been increased from 2.3m to 5.0m. This will reduce the impact of building massing, shadows, and overlook from within units into neighbouring homes.

- **Small Urban Village**

The commercial unit at the South East corner of the project has been intentionally located to extend the commercial frontage of the adjacent market and strengthen the small urban village.

- **Pedestrian Focus**

The frontage along Catherine Street continues to provide a gracious and friendly pedestrian focused space. The setback at the ground floor was increased to allow for a generous and covered entry providing planters, seating, stairs, and sloped [5%] surface leading to residential entry. Building tenants, spill out from CRU, and general neighbourhood will activate this extension of the public realm at ground floor of the project.

- **Patio**

The commercial space retains a patio along Bella Street.

- **Massing**

The general building massing along Catherine, Bella, Langford streets adheres to the approved submission minus the removal of the previous top floor. However, the building design and units continue to face the three streets, providing visual activation and 'eyes on the street'.

- **Windows**

Individual window size has been reduced while increasing the total number of windows and window area. As a result each unit has more glazing area to improve livability and visual

appeal. The design intent of strong window language on a unique pattern that highlights the massing as a volume is maintained through the new window strategy.

- **Amenity Area**

A rooftop amenity area has been provided of similar size to the one provided in approved application. The rooftop amenity area will be accessible to all building residents.

- **Landscape**

The number of new on-site trees [9] has remained the same.

Project at a Glance

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Height | North Setback | Number of Homes | Parking Stalls |
| 3 Storey | 3.1m | 27 Homes | 12 Stalls 100% EV Ready |
| Site Area | South Setback | Studio Bedroom | Short-Term Bike Stalls |
| 10,795 sqft | 3.9m | 2 Homes 8% | 11 Stalls |
| Floor Area | West Setback | One Bedroom | Long-Term Bike Stalls |
| 19,485 sqft | 2.4m | 15 Homes 56% | 40 Stalls 3 Cargo |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| FSR | East Setback | Two Bedroom | Residential Tenure |
| 1.8 FSR | 2.77m | 5 Homes 18% | Rental |
| Site Coverage | | Three Bedrooms | Commercial Space |
| 72.8% | | 5 Homes 18% | 1 CRU |

Unique Features

- Rooftop deck amenity space
- Increased setbacks to allow space between the building and western property
- High performance & sustainable building strategies
- Built to meet & exceed BC Step Code 3 wherever possible
- 1 on-street MODO, close proximity to E&N and Galloping Goose bike transit corridors
- Tree retention on Catherine Street

Project Benefits

Street Oriented and Pedestrian Friendly

Thoughtfully-designed to emphasize the public realm and community connection

Diverse Housing in a Small Urban Village

27 centrally-located rental homes with approximately half as 2-bedroom homes

Promoting a Car-Lite Lifestyle

Multi-modal transportation options, plus ample bike parking and MODO memberships for all residents

Neighbourhood-Serving Retail Space

A ground-floor local retail space, capturing the spirit and intent of the Small Urban Village

Secure, Purpose-Built Rental Homes

The strongest form of tenure and a beneficial alternative to homeownership

Closing

In summary, we have gathered feedback from the City and the community, which has been incorporated in this redesign to improve the development for both future residents and the neighbourhood at large. The communal space has been relocated to the roof away from neighbours and the setback from the western property line has increased. The building is now lower in height and less 'busy' architecturally. The building now responds to the neighbourhood context through more sensitive massing and enhancement of the urban "village heart" while meeting demand for rental units in the VicWest community. We believe that the proposed project better aligns with the community's vision, responds to housing need and will serve as a catalyst for positive growth in the area.

If you have any questions regarding the revisions please contact me directly at liv@aryze.ca.

Sincerely,



Liv McMahon

Development Manager
Aryze Developments
Aryze.ca