

Thursday, June 13, 2024

From: Tara Cumming (Designer & Applicant)

To: City of Victoria Mayor, Council, and Staff

Re: 1124 Topaz Avenue

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Dear Mayor, Council, and Staff,

This letter is to accompany our application for a Development Permit for 1124 Topaz Avenue.

The property is zoned R1-B and is in a Traditional Residential area in which the Missing Middle Housing Regulations apply. The proposal meets nearly all the requirements in Schedule P (Missing Middle Regulations), except for a minor variance for open site space (from 45% to 41.66%).

Following, are the aspects of this Corner Townhouse which show that the project is consistent with the Missing Middle Design Guidelines:

- ✓ The structure has a street-fronting orientation, with front entryways, stairs, porches, and primary windows facing towards the street.
- ✓ A single open site space that is much larger than the minimum required, is consolidated on the North side, to maximize contiguous soil volumes. Two new, large canopy trees are proposed in this area. These two large trees will prevent this space from being used to park vehicles.
- ✓ A generous 2.2m landscape buffer along the West side of the property will provide a green space between the neighbouring property and the driveway of this development
- ✓ Non-glare decorative lighting is proposed for the peaks of the building facing Prior Street. Soffit lighting at the front entrances and stair lighting along Prior Street will contribute to tenant's safety.
- ✓ The four segments of the building are stepped up along Prior Street, to match the natural slope of the property, and to ensure that all staircases from sidewalk level to main floor level are less than one storey in height.
- ✓ The South face of the building has a bumped-out area with a peaked roofline, to that this side of the building is interesting when viewed from the street.
- ✓ Upper-level windows on the North side are located and sized, in order to minimize overlook.
- ✓ Plantings are incorporated along the length of the frontage, on either side of the staircases to both soften the effect of the entrances, and create a green interface between building and the street

- ✓ Three large existing boulevard trees will be retained, and four new trees will be planted on the property.
- ✓ Lawn areas are limited to the North side of the property and can be used as a communal play & picnic area. The remainder of the property will be landscaped.
- ✓ All units have direct access to outdoor amenity space. Middle units have West-facing decks on the third and fourth floors and landscaped areas at their front doors. North and South units have their own private sunken patios.
- ✓ Off-street parking is provided by means of garages for the middle units, and surface parking for the end units.
- ✓ Parking is consolidated so that only one driveway access is needed. Garage doors are recessed into the rear of the building, and the majority of the surface parking is not visible from the street.
- ✓ The drive aisle and turn-around area can double as a play court for children when not in use by vehicles.
- ✓ Open site space is consolidated to the North of the parking area at the front, and to the South of the bicycle shed at the back, allowing enough soil volume for approximately three new trees (one at the front and two at the back)
- ✓ Landscaped areas include a mixture of trees, shrubs, low ground cover & various sized perennials. Edibles, native species, bird, butterfly & bee friendly plantings will be encouraged.
- ✓ A portion of the hard surfaces are proposed to be permeable pavers, to mitigate surface runoff.
- ✓ A long-term bicycle storage area is proposed to be located over top of two of the required parking spaces. This 'stacking' of the two uses helps to alleviate any extra site coverage.
- ✓ The bicycle storage will be accessible to all residents for storing bicycles as well as cycling gear and tools for adjustments and repairs. Bicycle storage will be equipped for electric bicycle charging.
- ✓ A range of finishes including shakes, vertical and horizontal siding, black iron railings and light fixtures, come together to create a building that has clean and contemporary lines, yet is warm & welcoming.
- ✓ Garbage and recycling areas are provided for each unit. When located outdoors, these areas will be screened with high quality materials.
- ✓ Outdoor components of heat pumps and air conditioners will be wall-mounted on the West face of the building, which is the wall that is the furthest away from neighbouring properties.

In addition to being a visually appealing and very liveable building, the proposal will also include the following climate-forward features:

- ✓ Zero Emissions Building - This building will be fossil fuel free including the provision of electrical vehicle charging stations.
- ✓ Building retention and reuse - All building products with market value will be salvaged for re-use prior to demolition. The remaining building components will be deconstructed in accordance with Victoria's deconstruction bylaw.
- ✓ Low Carbon Materials and Construction - Building materials for this project will be selected to minimize the global warming impact of materials manufacturing and production. This project will use Canada's cleanest greenest concrete supplied by Butler Brothers and utilize other low and zero carbon materials such as cellulose insulation, and natural wood finishes.
- ✓ Transportation - The project is located on a transportation corridor with both active and public transit options immediately available. Onsite bicycle parking and storage is secure and will be equipped with e-bike charging and space for cargo bikes. Each parking space will be equipped with electric charging infrastructure.
- ✓ Landscape - Drought tolerant plants native to southern Vancouver Island will be used for landscaping the property with special attention to creating an environment for local birds and pollinators.
- ✓ Climate Adaptation - large deciduous trees will be planted on the property. Each unit will be equipped with a mechanical ventilation system with interchangeable HEPA filters designed to clean the air in forest fire events or times of high air pollution.
- ✓ Innovation and Inspiration - While the scale and structure of this project does not provide the opportunity for the development of innovative construction technology, the form and function of the building and lifestyle implications for the occupants and community promote a low GHG lifestyle. Our team is open to sharing project information and lessons learned with the broader community with the goal of increasing the uptake of this type of building under Victoria's new missing middle housing initiative.

We feel that this project not only fits well within the Missing Middle Housing Design Guidelines, but that it will be an improvement to the neighbourhood as well. We appreciate your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Tara Cumming (Designer & Applicant)

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