



ETTA ARCHITECTURE INC.

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To City of Victoria Mayor, Council, Staff, Community Association & Neighbours

Re: 970 Walker Street, Victoria BC
Rezoning and Development Permit with Variances

The proposed development, 970 Walker Street, is located in the Victoria West neighbourhood, and is currently a vacant, irregular shaped lot. It is currently zoned under R1-S2, Restricted Small Lot (Two Storey) District. The Owners, are looking to maintain the R1-S2 zoning and add a secondary suite, as a permitted use, to a new single-family dwelling. The inclusion of a secondary suite along with some development permit variances would allow the Owners to house: One small extended family, acting as a 'single real estate entity'. The family is made up of a local physician, who lives and works in Victoria and travels to provide healthcare in remote parts of Canada and abroad, her sister and spouse (both Architects), their daughter and family dog. They hope to build this home to have a very low environmental footprint, targeting high performance building standards (ie: Net-Zero and/or Passive House) with an integrated landscape that encourages innovative food production given site and exposure constraints.

The Owners ask that the following variances are permitted:

1) Secondary Suite:

While secondary suites have not been officially adopted under the R1-S2 Zone as a permitted use, they have been included in the Victoria West Neighborhood Plan for the Northwest Sub-Area for Small Lot Houses. The Owners ask that the City permit a secondary suite, as a means of encouraging a more diverse housing stock.

2) Setbacks: Allowing small number of windows on habitable spaces with 1.5-meter side yard

Proposed window on east and west elevations are minimal but permit the passage of natural light improving the quality of spaces. While still complying with building code regulations, proposed window size and placement is sensitive to views and privacy of neighbouring properties.

3) Roof deck:

Permitting a roof deck would allow for vegetable gardening and maintenance of solar panels on a site that has limited, at-grade southern yard exposure. In addition, it would decrease storm water runoff alleviating pressure on already overburdened infrastructure, help the Owners offset food and energy costs, all while decreasing the heat island effect.

This proposal is in sync with the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan and the Victoria West Neighborhood Plan. The City and neighbourhoods have long been planning and strategizing around population growth, climate change, and more recently rising food and housing costs amidst a global pandemic. The proposed design takes its cue from several of the policy directions present in the City and Neighbourhood community plans related to housing diversity, green buildings, storm water management, climate change, renewal energy and food systems to name a few. Affordable vacant land is very difficult to come by in the City of Victoria, and as a first-time home buyer, this house will allow this extended

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family to enter the housing market after years of renting. Its construction will increase neighbourhood density, help revitalize the area and add value to neighbouring properties. For safety and security, its presence on the block will replace the overgrown vacant lot with more opportunities for appropriate design elements that improve surveillance and lighting on site.

The Owners recognize that construction would impact existing neighbours for a period with noise but intend to proceed respectfully, to manage site work and be mindful of generated traffic during construction. Noise or activity level on the block will not be significantly altered once the house is complete. The addition of an off-street parking place, should mean that there is no significant difference to available parking in the neighbourhood. Further this offers the Owners an opportunity to plug in an electric vehicle, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

Green Building Features

The proposed single-family dwelling and its architecture will complement and improve the existing neighbourhood as illustrated in its sensitive scale, visual character and material palette. The landscape design will further enhance the streetscape as it draws plantings closer to the curbside whilst combining food production, multi-season interest and considerations for maintenance and water use (non-potable water). Exterior ground treatments/paving will be permeable. Trees in poor condition will be replaced to meet City of Victoria Tree Preservation Bylaw. Urban agriculture is planned for strategic areas across the site and on the roof deck.

The design also intends to target a high-performance building standard such as Net-Zero and/or Passive House with a super insulated, airtight envelope and high-performance glazing. The Owners intend to provide structural support and pre-plumb for solar PV to help offset energy usage and costs. Plumbing fixtures will all be low flow/water saving and lighting and appliances will be energy efficient.

In closing, the approval of this rezoning and development permit with variances would allow one small extended family to live in close proximity, be supported and share in the experiences and spaces of a home designed to meet their needs, in an environmentally responsible and sustainable way that contributes to its neighbourhood.

We thank you in advance for consideration of this proposal. Please let me know if you have any questions or require further clarification. I can be reached at robyn@ettaarchitecture.ca or directly at 778.557.2300.

Sincerely,



Robyn Robertson, Architect/Owner
ETTA Architecture Inc.