



03 April 2017

Method Built Homes Ltd.
The Garage
4566 Cordova Bay Road
Victoria, British Columbia
V8X 3V5

Attn: Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, British Columbia
V8W 1P6

Dear Ms. Mayor and Members of Council,

Re: 953 Balmoral Avenue

Please accept this application for the approval of a rezoning and development permit application for the aforementioned property. It was recommended by the former Local Area Planner, Mike Wilson, that this application proceed as a joint rezoning and development permit application and that a site specific zoning would be created for this project. By way of background, we have worked diligently over the last three years with Local Area Senior Planner Leanne Taylor and Assistant Director of Development Services Allison Meyer on this application package.

This application is being brought forward after careful review of the Official Community Plan and the provisions thereof dealing with the North Park Neighbourhood and the 900 block of Balmoral Avenue. The OCP envisages projects of a larger scale and scope than the one being proposed. For example, a 2:1 floor space ratio is envisaged in the OCP for this location. We are proposing an FSR of 1.65:1. Additionally, there is a need in Victoria for more affordable housing.

Our most recent project was completed at 1032 North Park Street, as an 11-unit apartment. Like 1032 North Park Street, this project is a purpose built apartment building being designed and built in a neighbourhood that has traditionally had difficulty attracting large-scale capital investment.

As you are no doubt aware, the North Park Neighbourhood is a rich and vibrant part of the City of Victoria. New, affordable housing, particularly an apartment building geared towards non-affluent renters is precisely what this neighbourhood is looking for. There are other apartment projects that are targeting a more affluent demographic, but this project is vital to ensuring a diverse socio-economic mix within Victoria. This proposal is being advanced after several re-designs and lengthy consultations with Leanne Taylor and Allison Meyer.

The potential concern with this project lies squarely with the parking ratio being proposed. There are 11 units proposed for this project and servicing these units are five parking stalls; five general parking stalls and one dedicated MODO stall. As outlined in the enclosed report from Boulevard Transportation Group, the significant transportation demand management (TDM) measures proposed with this project are sufficient to offset the off-site parking that would otherwise be generated by this project. In other words, the: (a) proximate location of the project to downtown Victoria, including its access to major bicycle routes, (b) substantial number of bicycle lockers provided to each unit of the project, (c) provision of bicycles to each unit of the project, (d) public transit passes provided to each unit, (e) public information provided to residents of the project relating to TDM measures, and (f) purchase of a vehicle for the dedicated MODO stall respecting this project, cumulatively offset the off-site parking demand created by this project.

The need for quality, affordable housing in the City of Victoria is ever-present. Despite the provision of new high-quality purpose built apartments, the rents associated with these projects have not been inaccessible to a significant portion of our population. The North Park Neighbourhood is an eclectic community that is looking to avoid further gentrification. This project has been designed after taking into account the results of consultation with the North Park Neighbourhood Association. As a purpose built apartment building, this project is designed to meet the long-term needs of the local area and the City of Victoria more broadly. Our ongoing commitment to environmental sustainability and living where we work, shop and socialize requires us to consider the economic viability of projects such as these that look to minimize the use of, and our reliance on, vehicles.

Our goal is to build this project in a socially and environmentally sustainable way, much like an upcoming project I am a principal of that is going ahead at Dockside Green.

This project has been designed specifically for this neighbourhood in accordance with the OCP, consultation with the North Park Neighbourhood Association, and consultation with the City of Victoria. The building's design and mass has been modified to accommodate the concerns of the NPNA. This includes a reduction in floors from six to four and a unit reduction from 17 to 11.

The only technical non-compliance concern is with respect to on-site parking. The provision of significant TDM measures more than offsets the potential off-site parking impact of this project. The addition of significant sustainability measures and a project that has been custom-designed to address specific needs within the community, warrant strong support for this project to move forward expeditiously.

Kind regards,

Rajinder S. Sahota
Principal