

keay architecture ltd.

John Keay, Architect, AIBC

Nicole Parker, Architectural Technologist, AIBC

2nd Floor, 1124 Fort Street
Victoria, BC, V8V 3K8

o. 250-382-3823
e. info@keayarchitecture.com

August 28, 2019

To: Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
Planning Department
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, B.C.

Re: Rationale for 1125 Fort Street Rezoning

Dear Mayor and Council,

We are applying for the rezoning of 1125 Fort Street from a R3-1 to a new site-specific zone. This address is currently a single-family residence built in 1909. The owner, Donald Colborne, is proposing to preserve this historic home by moving it closer to Fort Street, on a new earthquake resistant foundation, and thoroughly renovating the interior. This will allow for a new residential suite at ground level and for a three residential unit addition at the rear of the existing home, where the lot extends to Meares St.

1125 Fort Street is a Queen Anne Revival style home by builder D.H. Bale, a notable figure whose career lasted 40 years, resulting in a significant impact on Victoria's cityscape. The home was one of three built for the Bantly Family¹. 1125 Fort Street was specifically built for family patriarch Ben Bantly and his wife Joanna Mensinger. The Bantlys owned a cigar factory and formed a popular local dance band.

Due to recent construction immediately to the west, the property now sits in the shadow of multi-storey condominium buildings. The proposed development is far less intensive than these neighbourhood changes² and provides a transition from them.

1125 Fort Street is in excellent condition, having maintained its key architectural features, notably a compact bellcast Queen Anne tower, with minimal alterations. We are proposing an addition at the back of the existing home but fronting on Meares Street, creating 3 new dwelling units and parking stalls located below. The parking will increase from a single space to 4, we are requesting a parking variance of 2. The new units in the addition will range in size from 116sq.m. to 125sq.m. Within the existing house the 2 units will be

¹ 1127 Fort Street remains while 1121 Fort, the former Bantry home closest to Cook St., has been moved to Fernwood.

² The adjoining same size lot at 1121 Fort St. was redeveloped as the 4 story 24 unit "Zen" condominium building. Immediately to the west of this is the 6 storey 75 unit "Black and White" condominium building now being completed. Across Meares St. at #1137 a previous parking lot is now a 3 storey 6 unit condominium building. Other intensive developments are proposed on single lots in the immediate neighbourhood, at 1015 Cook St. (31 units) and 114 Rockland Ave. (22 units)

105sq.m. and 199sq.m. This application proposes to increase the site coverage to 75%, and the total floor area to 870.9sq.m., resulting in an F.S.R. of 2:1.

The design for the addition is in accord with recent changes to the neighbourhood's streetscape but will not dominate the view or character of the original home. The home will be moved forward, enhancing its presence on Fort Street. The lot size (40ft. by 113ft.) restricts what can be done in terms of development without sacrificing the existing house. Moving the original home forward and adding an addition to the rear is a reasonable solution that does not promote an overbearing streetscape and allows for a comfortably sized addition with room for parking.

The location of the addition creates a unique challenge in connecting the two structures. The connection is accomplished through a shared stairwell and elevator, providing greater mobility for residents and which supports aging in place. Another positive feature of the addition is the generous size of the units when compared with the majority of new property developments in the downtown area, thereby fulfilling a need for more diverse housing options. Amenities on the property will include 12 secure bike parking stalls, large balconies, and a roof deck. The project will result in the stabilization and preservation of a significant residence in the Fort Street heritage precinct and provide a physical and visual transition from the high density blocks immediately to the west to the significant assembly of heritage and character buildings to the east.

The project provides modest additional density in Victoria's urban core, making the current home a greater reflection of urban residences whilst retaining its historical characteristics. We see this application as an opportunity to efficiently use the land available and establish new dwellings in an area of high housing demand.

Sincerely,

John Keay, Architect