

Attachment #5

Background Information

SITE CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

The subject sites are heavily sloped and located within the Albert Crescent Precinct of Downtown. The site is surrounded by Royal Avenue to the north, First Street to the east, Cunningham Street to the South, and Qayqayt Elementary School to the west. Across Royal Avenue are townhomes and some older three to four-storey apartments, and across First Street are older two to three-storey apartments. To the south of the site, along First Street, are single detached dwellings or duplexes, several of which are protected heritage properties. To the south of the property across Cunningham Street are three-storey apartment buildings. A site context map and aerial image is provided in Appendix A.



POLICY AND REGULATION CONTEXT

Official Community Plan

The subject properties are designated a combination of Residential – Low Rise Apartment and Residential – Mid-Rise Apartment.

The Residential – Low Rise Apartment is described as:

- targeted for residential uses;
- intended for low rise apartments;
- also may include townhouses, stacked townhouses, row houses;
- community amenities such as churches, child care, libraries or community space; and
- small-scale, corner store type retail, restaurant, and service uses permitted.

The Residential – Mid Rise Apartment is described as:

- targeted for residential uses;
- intended for mid-rise apartments;
- may also include low rise apartments, townhouses, stacked townhouses, row houses;
- may include community amenities such as churches, child care, libraries or community space;
- small-scale, corner store type retail, restaurant, and service uses permitted.

The proposed development is consistent with the intent of the Residential – Mid-Rise Apartment and Residential – Mid-Rise Apartment designation in the Official Community Plan.

Development Permit Area

The subject site is within the Downtown Development Permit Area and the Albert Crescent Precinct Design Guideline Area. The intent of the Albert Crescent Precinct design guidelines are to:

“...guide new development so as to foster a pleasant, primarily residential neighbourhood. Attention is given to street relationship in particular while additional consideration is given to fostering a built form that will enable neighbourhood scale retail, grocers, or cafes in limited locations. The guidelines recognize the unique block pattern – in which development sites generally include four “frontages” as opposed to a service laneway. All guidelines focus on primary urban design considerations as opposed to building style.”

Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan

The Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines and Master Plan provides guidance in achieving a high quality, cohesive Downtown that honours the historical and cultural context of New Westminster. This document serves as a toolkit to inform public realm improvements both on and off-site within the Downtown area.

The subject site is located within the Albert Crescent Precinct in the Downtown Building and Public Realm Design Guidelines. This area is described as follows within the guidelines:

“The Albert Crescent Precinct will maintain its residential character, with some mixed-use land uses at its western edge close to Sixth Street. Future improvements will aim to enhance the human scale of development, enhancing the pedestrian experience and respecting recognized heritage resources. This Precinct will continue to provide easy access to a range of amenities and

services. It will be served by two neighbourhood parks which incorporate active play spaces, and will be connected to Queens Park and Westminster Pier Park through enhanced pedestrian connections.”

Zoning Bylaw

The subject properties are currently zoned Single Detached Residential District (RS-2). The proposed project would not be permissible under the current zoning. As such, the Heritage Revitalization Agreement is required.

Family-Friendly Housing Bylaw and Design Guidelines

To meet City requirements, the project would need to provide a minimum of 30% two and three bedroom units within the proposed development, of which, 10% over the overall number of units would need to contain three or more bedrooms.

Inclusionary Housing Policy

The City's Inclusionary Housing Policy secures new affordable rental housing for very low and low income renters through the provision of below-market and non-market housing units. Applications seeking additional density, over what is considered in the Official Community Plan, are required to provide new rental units that are constructed onsite in multi-unit strata residential and mixed-use residential developments. This policy currently excludes wood frame buildings. As such, this proposal is exempt from the requirement to provide inclusionary housing.

Heritage Revitalization Agreement

A Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) is a negotiated agreement between the City and a property owner for the purposes of heritage conservation. In exchange for long-term legal protection and exterior restoration, certain zoning relaxations, including an increase in density, are considered. An HRA is not legally precedent setting as each one is unique to a specific site.

Heritage Designation Bylaw

A heritage property which is the subject of an HRA is also protected by a Heritage Designation Bylaw. A Heritage Designation Bylaw is a form of land use regulation that places long-term legal protection on the land title of a property and which is the primary form of regulation that can prohibit demolition. Any changes to a protected heritage property must first receive approval from City Council (or its delegate) through a Heritage Alteration Permit.

Heritage Inventory

The Heritage Resource Inventory is an informal listing of historic New Westminster properties. The heritage inventory was the City's first step to identify local heritage assets. A property listed on the Inventory is not legally protected.

Downtown Transportation Plan

The subject site is within the boundaries of the Downtown Transportation Plan, which identifies network improvements for the surrounding transportation networks including:

- enhanced pedestrian connections along Front Street
- a more comfortable walking experience and extension of the multi-use path along Royal Avenue
- improved cycling network connectivity between Downtown and Uptown with a lower slope multi-use pathway between Cunningham Street and Royal Avenue
- convenient access to transit on Agnes and First Street
- reallocation of road space for a quality people-centred public realm
- prioritized access to curb space
- improved accessibility with seating and resting opportunities

PROJECT STATISTICS TABLE

Characteristics	Existing Zoning / Requirement	Proposed
Site Area		
Gross		4,799 sq. m / 51,666 sq. ft.
Net (After Dedication)		4,451 sq.m / 47,912 sq.ft.
Site Frontage		101.5 metres (333 feet)
Lot Depth		40.2 and 48.5 metres (132 and 159.1 feet)
Floor Area		14,555 sq. m(157,153 sq.ft.)
Floor Space Ratio	0.5 FSR	3.3 FSR*
Building Height	7.62 metres (25 feet)	6 and 8 storeys 27.28 metres (89.5 ft.)
Residential Unit Mix	Family Friendly Housing Requirements (strata)– minimum 30% two and three bedroom units, of which 10% three bedrooms or more	1 BDR: 104 (55%) 2 BDR: 60 (31.7%) 3 BDR: 25 (13.2%) Total: 189 Units
Off-Street Parking		
Overall	237 spaces	253 spaces
Resident	218 spaces	234 spaces
Visitor	19 spaces	19 spaces
Bicycle Parking		
Long Term	236 long term spaces	236 long term spaces
Short Term	12 short term spaces	12 short term spaces

* as calculated based on net lot area after dedication and land purchase