

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Cote and Members of Council **Date:** December 13, 2021

From: Emilie K. Adin,
Director, Climate Action, Planning and
Development **File:** REZ00209
DP000875

Item #: 2021-657

**Subject: Rezoning for Passive House Triplex: 817 St. Andrews Street –
Preliminary Report**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to process the rezoning application for a triplex at 817 St. Andrews Street, as outlined in the “Consultation and Review Process” section of this report.

PURPOSE

To seek Council’s approval to process the rezoning application for a Passive House triplex at 817 St. Andrews Street.

SUMMARY

A rezoning application has been received to allow the construction of a triplex at 817 St. Andrews Street. The project has been designed to Passive House standards and would be seeking certification. The proposal development would be stratified, with two units in the front and one at the rear, and a Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 0.785. A Preliminary Application Review for this project was completed on September 28, 2020 and the applicant has incorporated some of the feedback provided into the current design.

BACKGROUND

Site Characteristics and Context

The subject site is located in the Brow of The Hill neighbourhood on St. Andrews Street near Ninth Street. The property has an approximate area of 432 sq. m. (4,653 sq. ft.) with a 15.09 m. (49.5 ft.) frontage on St. Andrews Street. The property is mostly level,

with a slight slope towards St. Andrews Street. There is rear lane access, but the current lane is undersized and underbuilt. The property currently contains a single detached dwelling.

The subject site is surrounded by a mix of other housing forms. To the east is a 35 unit low-rise rental apartment building. To the west are other single detached dwellings, including small lots. There is also a 16 storey rental apartment building across the street to the south. A site context map is shown below.

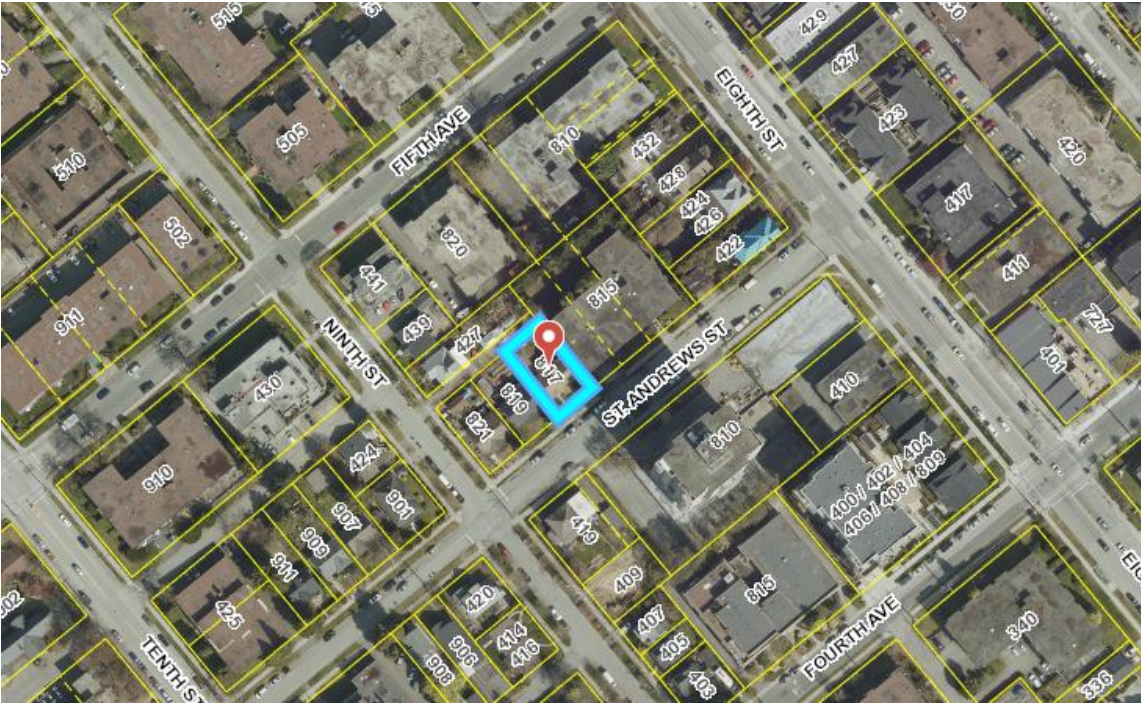


Figure 1: Site Context Map, with 817 St. Andrews Street highlighted in blue

Proximity to Transit Service and Other Sustainable Transportation Options

Both St. Andrews and Ninth Streets are classified as local roads. The lane behind the property is undersized at 4.88 m. (16 ft.) and dead-ends at the edge of the site. The sidewalk network surrounding the site is complete but undersized in some areas. The Crosstown greenway is approximately 500 m. (1,650 ft.) from the site, with shared-road connections. The property is located within close proximity to transit, as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Site Proximity to Transit Service

Transit Facility	Frequency	Distance
Bus Service #123	Approximately 15 minutes	120 m. (400 ft.) to the bus stop located at Eighth Street frequent transit network (FTN)
SkyTrain Station	2-5 minutes	1 km. (0.6 miles) to New Westminster Station

Project Description

The proposed development consists of a three-unit stratified triplex, with two units in the front and one at the rear. The proposal has been designed to Passive House standards for energy efficiency and is targeting Passive House certification. These energy efficiency standards have informed the building design in terms of roof forms, windows and wall assemblies. The applicant's rationale letter is available in attachment 2.

Plans indicate an overall density of 0.785 FSR. The proposal is for a slab-on-grade construction, with no basement. The units range in size from 109 sq. m. (1,177 sq. ft.) to 112 sq. m. (1,209 sq. ft.) and each have three bedrooms. Each unit has access to outdoor space, including both ground level and balcony areas, and there is also a shared outdoor area along the lane. A projects statistics table and proposed architectural and landscape drawings are included as attachments 3 and 4.

The applicant is proposing a total of three off-street parking spaces in two carports, accessed from the rear lane. As the rear lane is undersized, a 0.58 metre wide lane dedication is proposed. Bicycle parking and garbage/recycling bin storage are also proposed along the lane.

Related Applications

Preliminary Application Review

Before applying for the rezoning and development permit applications, the applicant sought feedback from staff. A Preliminary Application Review letter was issued on September 28, 2020 providing feedback on massing, design, engineering services upgrade requirements, and tree protection expectations. The applicant has incorporated some of the feedback provided into this design submission.

Tree Permit

As part of this rezoning application, the applicant also submitted an arborist report in support of a Tree Permit application. The site is not heavily treed, but there are numerous trees on neighbouring properties. A row of 8 metre tall cedars grown as a hedge between the site and neighbouring low rise apartment building area is proposed to remain, providing continued privacy. An additional neighbouring specimen-sized spruce tree near the front of the property will be protected. Only one tree along the lane edge would be removed for lane widening purposes, with replacement trees proposed.

DISCUSSION

Overall Evaluation

This Passive House Triplex proposal targets two key policy areas: the creation of family-friendly missing-middle infill housing, and the development of energy efficient buildings. The project would create three stratified, three-bedroom units in Brow of the Hill. This project would be the fourth certified Passive House built in the city, with the previous

projects all being single detached dwellings. Staff considers this to be an appropriate pilot project for consideration under the *Interim Review Policy for Duplexes, Triplex and Quadruplexes*.

Interim Policy Guidelines

The Interim Review Policy includes a set of guidelines for the massing and entries for each unit. Staff considers the overall density and form to be generally consistent with the neighbourhood's context, and the design to be generally consistent with the guidelines. Additional design work is needed, specifically in the areas of having visible entries from the street, private outdoor space design and reducing upper level deck overlook to adjacent properties. As part of the application review process, staff would work with the applicant to address these design items, based on the guidelines including in DPA 1.1 (Laneway and Carriage house) and 1.3 (Townhouse and Rowhouse).

Passive Design Exclusion for FSR

For ground-oriented residential such as single detached homes, duplexes and triplexes, thicker insulated wall assemblies are essential to achieving the thermal performance and occupant comfort requirements of the highest energy standards like Net Zero Energy and Passive House. The City's Passive Design Exclusion policy includes additional FSR for single detached dwellings built to higher performance standards, including an additional 0.05 FSR for passive house projects. Although additional FSR for triplexes has not been specifically created under this policy, staff consider it reasonable to apply a similar FSR when evaluating this project. Interim Review Policy identifies an FSR of 0.75 for triplex projects and this project is proposed at 0.785 FSR.

See attachment 1 for more information on this City's Passive Design Exclusion policy and attachment 2 for project statistics including FSR calculations.

Lane Width

The property is accessed by a 4.88 m. (16 ft.) wide lane at the rear. The interim policy outlines that triplex projects can be considered on lots that have a minimum rear lane width of 6 m. (20 ft.). Given the community benefits of a Passive House Project, and the proposed 0.61 m. (2 ft.) lane widening dedication proposed, staff consider flexibility on the lane width size to be reasonable in this case. The lot is 432 sq. m. (4,653 sq. ft.) and would be reduced to 424 sq. m. (4,564 sq. ft.) after an 8.3 sq. m. (89 sq. ft.) lane dedication is taken from the rear. A Comprehensive Development zone would be created for this project to capture the project's specific lot size.

Parking Considerations

Under the Infill Townhouse program, the loading and visitor parking spaces may occupy the same space. This proposal includes three vehicle parking spaces accessed from the rear lane, but does not include the required loading/visitor space. The applicant has requested that the requirement be waived for this project, as it is more similar in size to

a duplex (which do not require loading or visitor spaces) and that visitors could easily arrive by transit. There is street parking available on both sides of St. Andrews Street and an on-street loading zone located less than 25 metres (80 feet) away. Loading for the rear unit would most likely occur in the dead end lane. The applicant's rationale letter is available in attachment 2, and this aspect would be further evaluated by the City's transportation division as part of reviewing the proposal.

Demolition of Existing House

As part of the site redevelopment, the applicant has proposed to demolish the existing house on site. The house was built in 1926 in the craftsman style. Consistent with the City policy for houses older than 50 years, a heritage review was completed by staff, who noted that the building is in particularly poor condition. Given the applicant's intent to develop a passive house building, the project would be incompatible with a heritage retention project. This project features other benefits including the creation of missing middle housing and energy efficient construction, which are considered to outweigh the heritage considerations on this project.

CONSULTATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

As per the City's development review process, the anticipated review steps for this application are:

1. Preliminary report to Council (**we are here**);
2. Applicant-led public consultation, including dissemination of information through the local Residents Association;
3. City-led public consultation, including the creation of a Be Heard New West webpage and survey;
4. Council consideration of First and Second Readings of Rezoning Application and issue notice of waiving Public Hearing;
5. A Public Hearing (if scheduled) followed by Council's consideration of Third Reading and Adoption of the rezoning Bylaw;
6. Issuance of the Development Permit by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development.

As there are fewer than six units proposed, and the form of development is consistent with the Official Community Plan, the application would not be forwarded to the New Westminster Design Panel nor the Advisory Planning Commission for review and comment.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The City has a project-based team approach for reviewing development applications. This application has been reviewed by Engineering (Servicing and Transportation), Fire, Electrical, Parks and Recreation, and Climate Action, Planning and Development (Building, Planning, Trees, Heritage) staff who provide comments to the applicant throughout the development review process.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to proceed with processing the rezoning application at 817 St. Andrews Street, as outlined in the "Consultation and Review Process" section of this report;
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Policy and Regulations Summary
Attachment 2 – Applicant's Design Rationale
Attachment 3 – Project Statistics
Attachment 4 – Project Drawings

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
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This report was reviewed by:
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This report was approved by:
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Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer