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RE: Design Rationale Caretaker Res Alteration -7226 Balaclava St
Vancouver

Ryan,

7226 Balaclava St is part of an agricultural/equestrian property that includes Strata Lots 1, 2(subject property) and 3 (see survey) at the NE corner of Balaclava and W 57th Ave.

This aging structure, which presents to Balaclava St at approximately mid block is in poor repair, and in need of Code, Energy and Structural upgrades. (See Fig 1) The building is a nondescript craftsman styled two storey structure that had more contextual significance when it was originally built.

The owner wishes to perform the above noted improvements and bring the appearance of the building up to a commensurate aesthetic standard with the neighbourhood and environs.

The Caretaker residence is the only building on the east side of the block that addresses Balaclava and figures prominently with a front yard setback of 33.38' (See fig 3.)

The two homes on the east side of the block at 7273 Balaclava are set back further from the street with landscaped buffers and are mixture of shed, shallow gable and saw-tooth roofed structures They are reasonably obscured from the street, particularly in the summer months and were not designed to have a street presence. (See figs 4 and 5).



Fig 1. -Existing Caretakers house viewed from Balaclava St



Fig 2. -Proposed Caretakers house

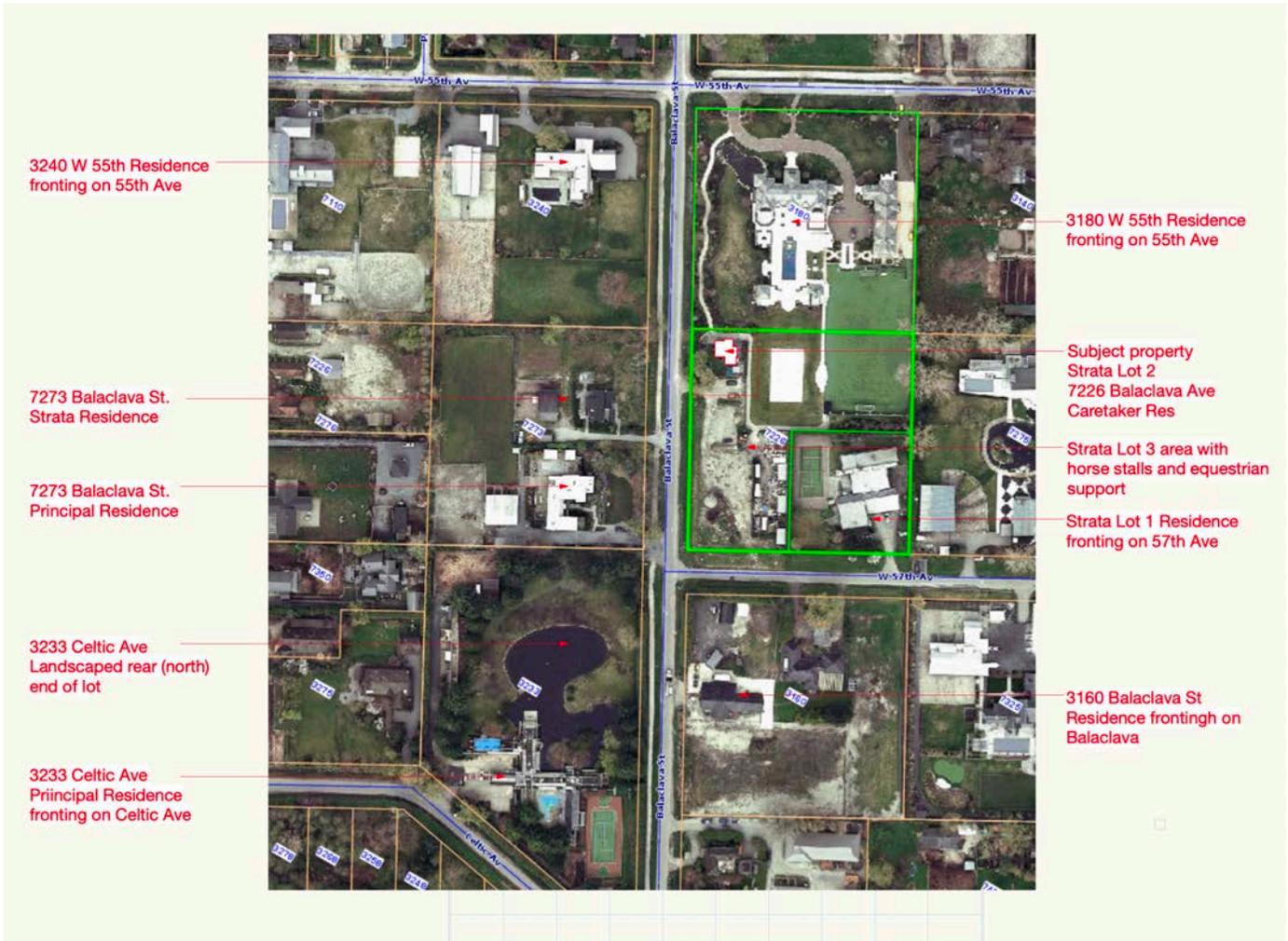


Fig 3. -Satellite overview of site and area



Fig 4. -7273 Balaclava Strata Res (closest res to subject Property) viewed from Balaclava



Fig 5. -7273 Balaclava Main Res (LHS) and Strata Res (RHS)

RA-1 Guidelines conformance

2.1 Neighbourhood Character

“..to ensure that new development will maintain and enhance the prevailing semi-rural character.”

The scale and massing of the Caretaker’s house will be preserved. As a relatively small building (1731 sf) the size will play a factor in preserving the semi-rural character and appearance. The informal finishes (stucco, stone and slate roofing) and the unstructured landscape will further reinforce this appeal.

2.2 Street Character

“The street edge.. assists in establishing a cohesive street character.”

The street edge on Balaclava is characteristic of the area with its ditch, lack of curbs and gradual visual transitions. The “Willows Stable” as this property is known will have the remaining mature willow preserved, along with the existing driveway crossings and low rail fences. In short, the existing streetscape will be preserved and enhanced in its existing state.

2.2.1. Site Character

“Particular importance should be paid to the inconspicuous siting of Caretaker’s and infill units.”

This project is a renovation of an existing building (in-situ) which will preserve the floor plates, massing and roof-scape as they present to the street. The building is not being moved and will maintain its relationship to the driveway, pedestrian access and the other buildings and existing significant landscape features on the lot.

2.2.2. Building Character

“Residential buildings should be secondary to and fit unobtrusively into the existing semi-rural context primarily created by the overall landscaping.. Caretakers units should be compatible and subordinate to the principal house.”

The context of this building is unique in that it is on a large lot and is not subordinate to a principle house. Because it is effectively being compared to itself, effort has been made to preserve The roof form, building mass, and basic fenestration pattern of the existing structure.

While this and the neighbouring site to the north are lushly vegetated and will only become more so in time as the landscape continues to mature, the caretakers unit is the only building that is visible on the site (south half of the block). The residence on strata lot 1 is at the SE (opposite) corner of the property is disassociated from the remainder of the lot by internal hedging. The principal dwelling on the property to the north, which is addressed on W 55th Ave can be glimpsed as part of the physical context and as such the cladding materials (stone at the base of the building, rustic slate roof etc) are referenced and can be seen as contextual to the neighbourhood.

3.1 Caretakers Quarters

“Caretakers units should be occupied by bona-fide caretakers of the subject site.”

The overall property (south half of the block) is large (108,927 sf [10,119 sm]) and requires a full time Caretaker who has traditionally overseen the boarding of horses, maintenance, grounds management and agricultural activities on the site. The Caretaker lives in the residence at 7226 Balaclava for which this residence has had dedicated use to date.

3.2 Retail Uses

“Limited retail functions [Per RA-1] if provided should present a low key image.”

Retail functions are not proposed at this time.

4.3 Height

“New development should be compatible with the prevailing height of existing built form.”

The work proposed to be done to this existing structure are improvements, which qualify as renovations to the existing building, and as such are not subject to the current flood plain requirements. Those requirements notwithstanding, the main floor and second floor of the building are proposed to be raised. The main floor will be one foot higher to create freeboard to mitigate potential flood issues. The second floor will be raised an additional 1'-8 ¾" to create a 9'-0" ceiling height at the main floor. The proposed in-situ height modifications to the existing building have been made with respect to compliance with the height bylaw. The proposed roof peak is 4.6' below the allowable maximum (see Project data Architectural sheet A1).

Because the building is 6" from the north setback line, (see E and W building elevations, architectural drawing sheets A8 and A9) the main gable has, to date, and continues to violate the 45° height envelope at the north wall. It is requested that the Director of Planning relax the requirement for compliance with the 45° envelope at this location.

4.4-4.6 Front, Rear and Side Yards

“New developments should maximize front and side yards to emphasize semi rural character and contiguous open space.”

The proposed project is an in-situ renovation which will preserve the existing setbacks. It should be noted that this is a mid-block strata lot and as such has no identifiable or recognizable side yard setbacks. The

landscape architect has purposely designed the landscape to maintain and enhance this contiguous landscaped character. (Refer also to Paul Sangha Ltd Site Plan drawing)

4.9 Off Street Parking and Loading

“..minimize the impact of parking areas to maintain a semi-rural character”

(Refer to Paul Sangha Ltd Site Plan drawing and rationale)

The proposed permeable area of parking servicing the Caretakers Unit will be screened from the street with appropriate soft landscaping in addition to incorporating the existing low transparent fence on the property side of the existing ditch.

4.16 Width and Depth

“..development should be compatible with the prevailing built form in width and depth.”

The existing width and depth of the building is proposed to be retained. There are no other existing buildings fronting on Balaclava St on this block.

7.0 Open Space

“..development should maintain or create significant, visible and contiguous green areas.”

Given the size and frontage of the overall property (See survey drawing) and the relative proximity of the existing caretakers unit to the street there is significant open space area to the north and south which shall be maintained and enhanced. The placement of the building and lack of proximity to others on the site make it well suited for adhering to the open space objectives. (See Fig 3 overview of site and relation of buildings to open area and adjacent structures).

7.3 Private Open Space

“..development should minimize the visual impact of private open space, swimming pools, tennis courts and any other uses incompatible with semi-rural character.”

As a function based facility, Strata lot 2 has no proposed amenities. There are no private open space amenities on the site. This arrangement will continue to be maintained and improved.

9.0 Landscaping

“..development should maintain and enhance the cohesive, characteristic landscaping treatment that emphasizes a soft informal green image.”

See Paul Sangha Ltd Landscape rationale

10.0 Filling and Drainage

“All flood proofing, fill and impervious surfaces should be inconspicuously integrated into the prevailing topography and landscaping..”

As mentioned in item 4.3 The work proposed to be done to this existing structure are improvements which qualify as renovations to the existing building, and as such are not subject to the current flood plain requirements. Those requirements notwithstanding, the main floor and second floor of the building are proposed to be raised. The main floor will be 1' higher to create freeboard to mitigate potential flood issues, all within the allowable height envelope. As a result, Guideline item's a)-i) and m) will not apply. Impervious surfaces have been minimized, driveways are permeable material at existing site grade level and a Filling and Drainage Plan should not apply.

Kent Halex, Architect AIBC
Principal -Halex Architecture

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cc-File, Client, JM Eng, Paul Sangha Ltd.