

# MEMORANDUM

Nov 19, 2024



---

*Thank you for your further comments on the proposal for Helmcken and Camden. Our project team has reviewed the comments, and we are pleased to submit revised drawings, please see attached.*

*Find our comments in blue below in the order that you listed them in your email.*

## **Zoning:**

1. Typically staff would not recommend a comprehensive development zone, this proposal could make use of the existing RM-3 Zone; however, given past communications with the public and Council, staff can justify the use of a CD zone as a one-off. Staff have concern with the side yard setback and will further review setbacks in preparation of the CD Zone. A variance may be required, which may be processed through the development permit application.

*Thank you for consideration of continuing the zoning amendment as a Comprehensive Development Zone. As we have engaged with neighbours and the signage has been erected it maintains continuity and eliminates unnecessary confusion.*

*We are unsure of what side yard setback Planning may have concern; however we have evaluated the project layout and setbacks and are confident that the project design is reasonable and functional, and that neighbours we have met with have not expressed any concerns.*

*We understand that with this being a Comprehensive Development Zone that the setbacks will be described as shown on the attached plans, therefore a "variance" process should not be required. We do understand that the staff report may make comments to Council and ultimately Council will make a decision on the project, including the setbacks we propose.*

## **Parking:**

1. In your application, please clearly provide the dimensions for all parking spaces. Staff cannot support a variance to the minimum required parking stall space dimensions. The dimensions include the length, width, height clearance (where inside), and clearance to walls. For reference, see Section 5.5.1 of the Zoning Bylaw and subsections (b) and (c). Staff note the following:

*Thank you, dimensions are now clearly shown, including interior dimensions for the enclosed garages, to which the dimensions meet the bylaw requirements for stall dimensions for regular or small car.*

- a. The parking spaces for units 8 to 12 appear to be especially small, permitting only a single side for vehicle entry/exit when parked. The cars appear to be backed in so that vehicle exit/entry may be done on the left side of the vehicle, while also permitting access for the door from the garage to living space. Front loading appears to provide access/egress challenges for door access.



*We confirm that the garages in units 8 to 12 have been adjusted based on your explanation of the bylaw widths required, being that the parking stall have an additional .3 m per side for a total width of 3 m. We note that we have used the bylaw width requirement for small vehicle for all five units in this block for continuity and we acknowledge that we are permitted 4 small car spaces, therefore we ask that the Comprehensive Development Zone recognize an increase to 5 small car spaces.*

- b. It appears the vehicles used are a mix of small hatchback, compact, or sub-compact sized vehicle types. Staff note that there is a size discrepancy between the vehicles used (e.g., 2009 Ford Escape) and what is being manufactured today (2024 Ford Escape). The size of a 2024 Ford Escape is approximately 7 inches wider and 4 inches longer than the 2009 production model. This has a large impact on the total required operable space for turning, to park a vehicle, and the required door swing radius for entry/exit. Staff have concerns as there may be residents that do not have small hatchback, compact, or sub-compact vehicles and would be required to park on the street, which contravenes the Town's off-street parking requirement for each unit.

*Thank you for your comments. In terms of the vehicles shown the dimensions were not created by the architect, the vehicle models and dimensions are pre-loaded in the architect's software.*

*We understand that some vehicles are not appropriate for parking in an urban townhouse project, similar to other multi-family formats and configurations. Our experience is that buyers with the need for large vehicle parking do not purchase or tenant urban townhouses. In past projects we have found that the great majority of buyers have compact vehicles or compact SUVs. The garages shown accommodate the great majority of vehicles sold in Great Victoria.*

2. Staff cannot support a variance of 6 m for the maneuvering aisle of either the 'visitor' parking space, or to the spaces within each of the 12 dwelling units; the minimum required by Bylaw is 7.6m, without obstructions. Staff recommend one of the options below to move forward:
  - a. Staff could support a reduced maneuvering aisle provided that a traffic consultant complete a turning template and memo showing vehicles can move within the space without collision. The turning templates provided indicate cross-over and collision with landscaping/building features (stairs), based on line overlap. Based on their findings, a revised arch drawing, civil, tree management, arborist report, and landscape plan are required;

*Our design team has never encountered a situation where a "maneuvering isle" is being applied to a strata access lane, especially where the distance between parking garages has been designed with 9.2 m separation, however we have reviewed the bylaw and propose that the lesser width of 6.7 m allowed for underground or within a building be applied to our proposal.*



*We have deducted that the lesser width of 6.7 m in underground or within a building is due to the fact that these circumstances would be a multi-family use, therefore with the multi-family use smaller vehicles would be expected. We suggest that the proposed urban townhouses fits within this rationale.*

*The architect has demonstrated that the 6.7 m strata access lane and the additional area provided by the driveway aprons is sufficient for vehicles to park front first or back into the parking spaces / garages. We have also engaged Watt Engineering to verify this information and will forward their summary when received.*

- b. The proposed landscaping could be removed; however, this will further reduce the number of replacement trees on site and increase the deficiency of replacement trees required or cash in-lieu required. Staff would require a revised tree management plan, arborist report, and landscape plan should you move forward with this option; or

*It is our design team's position that the landscaping features adjacent to the strata access lane are an important aspect for the livability of the project and we do not want to lose this landscaping when the strata access lane plus driveway aprons provide 9.2 m of distance between garage doors.*

- c. The building closest to Helmcken could be shifted closer towards helmcken. This would likely impact the existing municipal trees off-site (and shared on property line), as well as those trees on 16 Helmcken Road. Staff would require revised arch drawings, civil drawings (as required), tree management plan, arborist report, and landscape plan should you move forward with this option.

*As tree retention is a primary goal of the project, we are not in favour of locating the block closer to Helmcken.*

### **Development Permit – Form and Character**

1. Staff have concern with the design of the building 'ends' of Building A and B fronting Camden Road and 16 Helmcken Road. In review of the Town's Official Community Plan, under Development Permit Form and Character (Mixed Residential) – the proposal could benefit from implementing design elements covered in (Design) subsections i., v., vii., iv., and viii and (Siting, Height and Massing) subsections ii., iv.. In summary, staff believe that the proposed designed could be further improved with a focus on building orientation to the street (for the side front Camden) which may be facilitated with the removal of the electrical housing. Both buildings ends would benefit from further and enhance building articulation to emphasize the buildings relationship with the road frontage. A combination of articulation, windows, and roof lines would be improvements and would reduce the appearance of a large singular wall face.



*We have considered comments on the elevations fronting Camden Avenue and our design team feels that the proposed elevations provide a variation in colours, movement within the building lines, and maintains the design elements of the project.*

*We have also considered comments on the elevations facing 16 Helmcken and we have added some variation of colour to the elevation plus added some further design detail to soften this elevation. We recognize that the adjacent lands will ultimately be redeveloped in the future and this elevation will be largely obscured however we feel the changes made on the attached drawings improve the elevations.*

*We understand that Council will ultimately decide if our design team's design opinion is acceptable during the DP portion of the process.*

2. To improve accessibility to green spaces, staff recommend using permeable pavers instead of crush gravel for the pathways.

*We have adjusted the landscape drawing to include permeable pavers in lieu of gravel for the sloped path access to the amenity garden area and have retained the compacted gravel surfaces within flat areas of both amenity areas.*

I have asked my colleagues to clarify a few things in Engineering with respect to trees. I will forward correspondence as required.

*We have received no further information on this item therefore no changes or clarifications have been made.*

*Thank you for your review and comments on the project to date. We recognize that there are a few items that the Planning Department raised that were considered by our design team, and ultimately no revisions were made, however overall we feel the project as currently presented is balanced and functional, and provides attainable ground based housing.*

*We always strive to achieve full support from the Planning Department with our projects, but we do understand that there may be times where we cannot meet every expectation or preference.*

*We ask that the application as presented move forward to Council for their consideration at the earliest opportunity. After almost three years in the planning and approval process we are eager to present the proposal to Council and ultimately see construction start in early 2025.*

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Hopkins', written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Hopkins  
Merdyn Development Group