

June 23, 2017

Mayor and Council

Re: Proposed design 615 Fernhill Road



We own 619 Fernhill Road, a 5 unit rental building. We are members of Landlord BC and follow rent it right practice. This is our input on the proposed design at 615 Fernhill Road.

We support rezoning of this property – we do not support this design. Zoning requirements are safeguards to mitigate impact on neighbouring properties – the design proposed does not meet RM4 zoning requirements therefore impacts the neighbouring properties negatively with its massing, hardscape and lack of greenspace.

The lot is simply too small to support RM4 zoning. To achieve the 1:1 density in 4 stories all setbacks have to be encroached upon. Drive aisles and entrances on this size of lot brings an overabundance of hardscape on this property.

Setbacks are put in zoning to mitigate impact to neighbours. This design encroaches all of the zoning setbacks. Units number 1, 3 and 5 of 619 Fernhill Rd have sitelines down Fernhill road. Not following the front setbacks at 615 Fernhill Rd significantly impacts the liveability of these units at 619 Fernhill Rd.

Unit 1 at 619 Fernhill Rd is significantly impacted by the arbor at the front of the 615 Fernhill Rd design and the front setback of the design proposed. The decks are raised 1 meter above highest natural grade and are pushed to the front setback of the property line. These arbors sit at 11 feet high from natural grade, again outmassing any existing building. Unit 2 and 4 are also significantly impacted by the rear setback being encroached by the design at 615 Fernhill Rd. The sitelines existing now will be nonexistent if this design is approved by council. If setbacks are followed 619 Fernhill Rd will still have sitelines of streetscape and natural elements.

The height of 615 Fernhill Rd is being pushed up by raising the building by 1 metre from the highest natural grade of the property. This allows every unit on the North side of the building to look down into the livingrooms, bedrooms and bathrooms of 619 Fernhill Rd. Raising the floor elevation makes the grade slope back toward 619 Fernhill Rd 16" from first floor to the top of the retaining wall between the two properties.

RM4 zoning is designed to have 4 stories and reduce the site coverage, giving more green space. This simply is not possible on the lot at 615 Fernhill Rd. To meet the 1:1 density the design has to encroach all the setbacks, which are there to protect the neighbouring properties.

The greenspace is on the private North side of the building in this design. This impacts all the neighbours outlook as they are seeing only hard surface. Stairs and private patios go to the property line taking away any greenspace. Not only is the property at 615 Fernhill Rd a majority of hardscape, the boulevard is also a majority of hardscape with 3 sidewalks and a driveway access. The Oak tree could remain if all setbacks were met and hardscape did not take over this property. The arbor heights at the front of the building are from the proposed raised grades of the patios, these arbors negatively impact 619 Fernhill Rd

The front elevation of the design at 615 Fernhill Rd articulates in and out for sun decks, otherwise it is a flat surface. The design gives no perception of "townhouses". If the top unit stepped back the design would give the illusion of "townhouses" and add some visual interest and also respect the building to the North, 619 Fernhill Rd. The rest of the design at 615 Fernhill Rd is flat lines with sun decks projecting out of the flat surfaces. The building already encroaches into the offsets and the sun decks encroach even further into the offsets

RM4 zoning does not fit on the proposed property. The design encroaches all setbacks, variances are being asked for in all areas. If this property was amalgamated with another property the proponent could build an RM4 building that would benefit the neighbourhood allowing for greenspace, appropriate setbacks and higher density. If this property at 615 Fernhill Rd is considered RM4 it produces an inferior product, negatively impacting the neighbourhood with hardspace and significant massing. The Fernhill Rd neighbourhood deserves density while still enjoying the greenspace which keeps the neighbourhood liveable and peaceful with positive outlooks.

We believe if a design was proposed that kept RM4 height but restrict density to RM3 of .6 there would be a design that would allow appropriate site coverage, better greenspace, parking, meet offsets and not outmass the neighbourhood.

Respectfully

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Sidenote – there are many "buzzwords" in this proposal – passive solar, green, family friendly and very affordable. This design does not seem to be any of the above. This is a conventional wood frame build with little green space for a family to enjoy. Building "very affordable" housing is a difficult task if the builder is not associated with an Affordable Housing Association, without this affiliation how do these units stay "very affordable".