

Applicant Submission



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RE: DP2018-5576
1827 14th Street SW – Nimmons Court

APPLICANT STATEMENT

Nimmons Court proposes to redevelop the historic Nimmons Residence site, located on the edge of the inner-city community of Bankview at 19th Ave and 14th Street SW. The proposal includes preserving and relocating the 19th century Queen Anne Revival-style Ranch House to the prominent South East corner of the existing parcel to accommodate a contemporary 6-storey, multi-residential building. The 84-unit building is to be constructed in two phases. The first phase comprises of shoring and erecting a portion of the underground parking structure which will subsequently support the relocated historic house. In the second phase, the remainder of the parking structure will be constructed along with the 6-storey wood-frame multi-residential development above.

MERGING HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY

The proposed contemporary massing frames the existing heritage house on two sides and works to merge two periods of architectural expression. This marriage of architectural style has been paramount in our design decisions and amendments from what was presented in our original Development Permit submission in 2018. The historic house has now been proposed to be relocated at zero-lot line along its south face, benefiting the development on two fronts by further renewing its presence to the public as a landmark along the intersection of 14 Street and 19 Avenue SW and by expanding the courtyard space between the two buildings.

The proposed building's massing and siting is carefully considered to provide for enhanced views to the house from the City. The massing of the northeast wing of the proposed Nimmons Court has been carved away where it faces the historic house, in order to preserve unhindered views to the veranda from 14 Street and conversely, to the City from the veranda.

Articulation along 19 Avenue unites the proposed with the historic, where materiality, form and fenestration display a street-oriented and human-scaled townhouse style arrangement. Traditional-style windows along the first two storeys evoke industry and order – paying homage to the turn of the 19th Century when the Nimmons Residence originated. The historic connection from the entrance to the Nimmons Residence to 19th Avenue has been preserved and been given hierarchy over the connection to the proposed building entry behind the Nimmons House to the same residential street. An aperture bisecting the two fronts in a wide, well-lit opening acts as principal entry into the proposed building.

DISPLAYING THE NIMMONS RESIDENCE

Explorations in articulation and materiality prove to revere the historic house and to modernize the proposed development, both efforts working hand-in-hand to provide one cohesive design language. Building materiality and character of the cultural asset is reflected in the proposed building by adorning brick – now grayscale – on the first two storeys. Window openings along these storeys are ordered. A change in materials above the second story is intended to emphasize the eave line of the Nimmons

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Residence. Where Nimmons Court faces the residence, building materiality is whitewashed (both masonry and metal composite panels) to respect the uniqueness of the latter and exhibit it, akin to the white walls of an art gallery. Once clear of the historic house, white fiber cement panels surround now staggered window openings to present an explorative wit and a notion of individuality. Integral to this articulation and materiality however is the indication that the building remains a “backdrop” of sorts to the cultural asset it surrounds.

Landscaping within the courtyard shared between the proposed development and the historic house is a form of reprieve between the two buildings. As the Nimmons Residence is situated along the southern edge of the courtyard, sunlight bathes the space particularly during the summer months. This outdoor amenity fosters a dialogue between both end users and the buildings. Planting within this space has been selectively chosen to evoke the historic house, remaining as accurate to the time period as possible, including blossoming crabapple trees. This courtyard varies in width between the facades of the proposed and existing building from 7.4m – 11.5m. A minimum dimension of 5.4m occurs within this courtyard from the edge of the open veranda to the southernmost edge of the proposed building. Boulevard trees within planters along 14th street provide for a contemporary replacement for the existing row of young Ash trees along the west property line.

RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING SITE CONDITIONS

The proposed 14 Street building elevation diffuses the parking structure’s prominence as a result of the challenging site (~5.5 meter grade change), resulting in a design response that serves to enhance and interact with the pedestrian realm in a manner that is ever-changing throughout the seasons. Columnar trees flank the 14th Street access and flowering trees fill the planters south of this entry. Vertical mesh panels will become living walls for climbing vines along the road right-of-way (within the 1.8 meter allowance into the bylaw setback) to soften the interface between the parkade levels and the 14 Street sidewalk. Decorative signage and ornamentation (such as the extension of the existing Nimmons Residence balustrade and the “NIMMONS” relief along the planter boxes) highlight the historic house it leads from/toward. Additionally, frosted windows into both levels of the parking structure help to reduce the potential conflict from the parkade wall through moments of transparency and movement. Although the primary entrance is located off of 19th Ave, pedestrian access to the building is provided at an entrance on 14th Street that is signified by a change in materials, a canopy and a bench. Other improvements to the public realm include widening the sidewalk on 14th street and providing for “striped” landscaping that has a high degree of visual interest with low maintenance. These enhancements to the 14th Street public realm are also visible and thus an improvement to the 17th Ave SW Main Street.

Vehicular access and waste services have also been challenges, but have been resolved successfully with discreet and logical integration. Access to the parkade is via the back lane connecting to 17th Avenue SW. Waste and recycling containers are provided at the southwest corner of the site in semi-underground “Molok” containers.

In addition to the aforementioned efforts, various City Policies, including the Bankview ARP that was amended specifically to consider this land use and scale of development, have also informed the design in terms of massing, spacing and setbacks. The resulting development is a contemporary counterpoint and showcase to the preservation of a historic resource that also connects to the larger city as it is today and into the future.

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