



RELIANCE
PROPERTIES

DAUSTUDIO

architecture + urbanism

2960 Jutland Road
Victoria BC Canada V8T 5K2

250.384.2400
mail@daustudio.ca
www.daustudio.ca

November 14, 2024

City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Attention: Mayor and Council

Re: Capital Culture District (also known as 'LoRo (Lower Rock Bay) and, 'The Capital Iron Site'): Application for Rezoning to a Comprehensive Development Zone based on an Urban Design Plan for subject properties at 1824, 1900, 1907, 1908, 1924, 2010 Store Street and 530 Chatham.

*Introduction
and Overview*

On behalf of Reliance Properties, **DAUSTUDIO** is pleased to provide updated Design Documentation for this application. The graphics and date reflect an extensive process of consultation and collaboration with City Planning, Engineering, and other technical staff. Updates pertain to Land-use, Density and Zoning Parameters for redevelopment. The 6.7-acre site is comprised of properties on the boundary between Downtown-Old Town and the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood. In cooperation with City Planning Staff, this development application is structured as a comprehensive, multi-phase Rezoning and OCP amendment, with subsequent Development Permit Applications for each phase of development. The urban design outcomes of the proposed Comprehensive Development (CD) Zone are illustrated in the included Urban Design Plan. This is to assist in visualizing the likely form and characteristics that would result from the complete build-out of the properties, within the parameters and in compliance with the proposed CD Zone.

The Capital Cultural District Proposal is a unique opportunity to revitalize an emerging City district through principled private development. The project envisions an integrated, resilient and heterogeneous neighbourhood that balances private economic interests with arts/cultural spaces and a superior public realm. To achieve this, the proposal draws upon comprehensive planning best practices.

Inspired by local precedents of Selkirk Waterfront and Dockside Green, the Capital Culture District CD Plan will guide the gradual, phased urbanization of these brownfield lands including frontage on the upper harbour. The area has a long and varied history of post colonization economic and industrial activities, which for many decades served an important function in the development and growth of Victoria and the region. Under the proposed Rezoning, light industrial and dormant marine uses will be reinvigorated and integrated with new uses. As most of the subject properties have devolved from heavy industry such as ship salvage, they are ready to transition to a resilient socio-economic mix and higher intensity of use. This

process has begun organically, by attracting entrepreneurial, small-scale manufacturing, brewing, arts and crafts, recreation, retail-wholesale, high-tech/offices, non-profit institutional, food and beverage, as well as residential redevelopment in both renovated and new buildings.

The proposed Capital Culture District Plan is significantly located at the heart of the area designated as an Arts and Innovation District in the City's 2020 Victoria 3.0 Economic Action Plan; the Victoria 3.0 principles and goals have been integrated into this rezoning application. It is important to note that along with economic land development viability, the Applicant's goal is to accommodate long-term, incremental, and flexible uses. The careful balance of non-residential, commercial employment and residential uses will encourage a varied demographic and mix of uses. As a place in transition from fading industry and parking lots, to an urban complete city, it is bound to attract a wide demographic that includes creatives, makers, and entrepreneurs. To achieve this goal, the proposed range of housing sizes, types and tenures are important to the Plan's economic viability.

The guiding intention is investing in new private buildings as well as repurposing heritage structures and creating public space and arts/cultural facilities. To that end, Reliance Properties, and the Board of Directors of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) have signed a Letter of Intent to locate a new Art Gallery as a keystone part of Phase One, at the heart of the Plan.



Illustration of future build out of the Capital Culture District Plan

*Planning Policy
and
Parameters:*

The Capital Culture District Plan has been designed to balance the multi-faceted priorities of the site and project proforma, while meeting the intent of City policy objectives and demonstrating best practices for progressive, sustainable urban design. The proposed CD Zone establishes a framework to intensify and diversify uses, and thereby reflect aspirations of the 'Victoria 3.0 Arts and Innovation District'.

Density

The proposed Capital Culture District Plan has an overall Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 3.14:1 (Block A FSR 2.05:1, Block B FSR 4.5:1). A range of densities are proposed as part of the arrangement of uses and building types that form the urban design plan.

The density proposed is a slight increase over the previous proposal of OCP compliant 3.0:1 FSR. The increase stems from the resolution by Council on May 16, 2024 which recommends reduction in height of the tallest buildings, redistribution of the density, allowing for a minor increase in the project's overall floor area.

Land Use

The Capital Culture District Plan includes "Core Employment" Land Use as designated in the OCP and "Employment Centre" as identified in the DCAP, as well as the "Marine Industrial"/"Industrial Employment"/"Industrial Arts" called for in the Burnside-Gorge Local Area Plan. Consistent with these policies, the Plan's proposed uses include marine and light industrial, commercial, arts and cultural, high tech, residential, live/work and more. Additional uses, beyond those anticipated in current policy, respond to the aspirations of Victoria 3.0. The infrastructure provides flexibility of use and location, that are fundamental concepts of the arts and of innovation. Existing industrial uses, compatible with adjacencies, will be integrated as the plans develop.

Height

A range of building forms and heights create fitting proportional relationships to streets and public open spaces. The proposed street edge conditions and scale are established by careful spacing and proportions of buildings in relation to heritage sites. Calibrated setbacks, and a 5-storey podium along Chatham Streets are key to the urban fit. Building podiums will be setback or have recessed ground floors to create wide public sidewalks.

Taller buildings (with more floor area) are essential to balancing the economic viability of the project with the provision of publicly accessible open space. To achieve this balance, some building heights proposed exceed those anticipated by the existing area-specific planning policy. Two 14-storey residential buildings are proposed east of Store Street and one 8-storey building is proposed west of Store Street. The heights and locations of these buildings are carefully integrated to mitigate perceived negative impacts of this additional height.

The shape and position of the two taller buildings mitigate view and shadow impacts. Overall, the 2 tall buildings are diagonally aligned and descend in height from Government Street elevation toward the harbour sea-level for sunlight and views. It is important to note that all built projects within this comprehensive plan will be subject to separate Development Permit applications and processes and will be governed by the guidelines of the Downtown Core Area Plan.

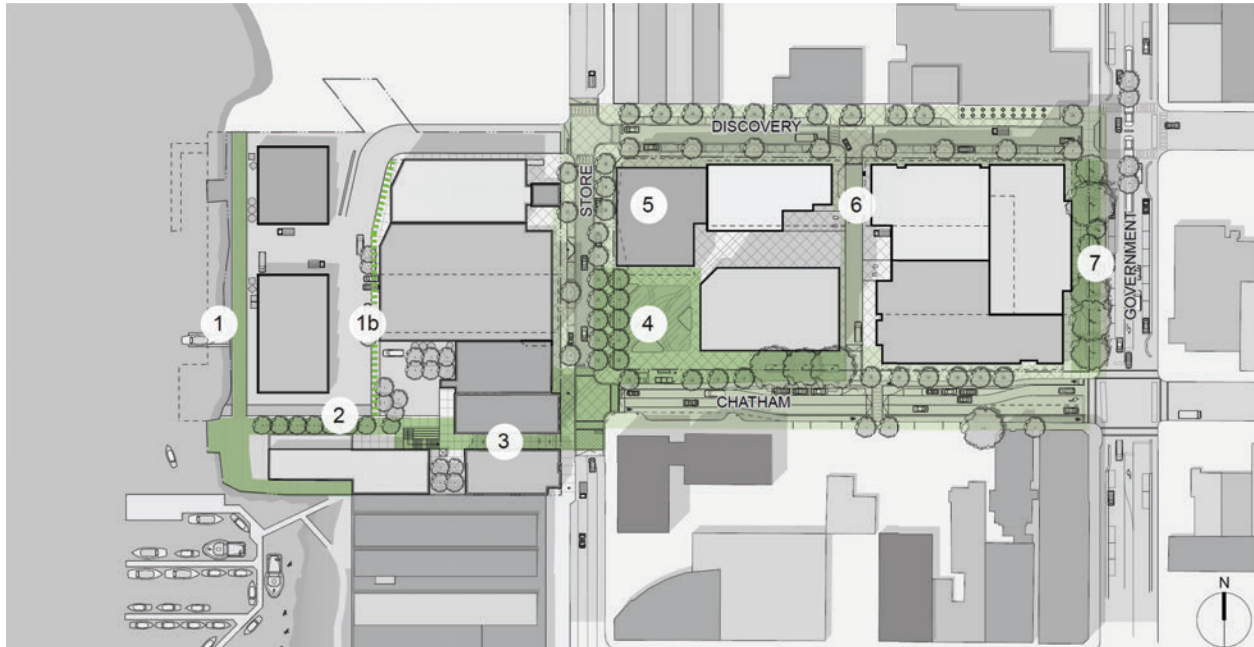
*Need and
Demand,
Benefits and
Amenities*

The Capital Culture District Plan seeks to balance a complex amalgam of public needs and private objectives. The proposed CD zone has been crafted as a careful integration of land-use planning and humanistic urban design, to ensure the quantitative zoning parameters are founded on intentional qualitative principles of good urban design. The Developer and Design Team have been mindful of the scale, population density and heterogeneity, beauty, and safety of the proposed urban district, guided by the following **Planning Objectives**:

- **A Balanced Mix:** Augmented and adaptable facilities for present commercial and industrial activities, and a wider variety of uses around a network of public spaces. These include a new plaza adjacent to a major cultural institution (strongly anticipated to be the AGGV) as well as separate, direct public and marine commercial access to the harbour. Buildings to accommodate a variety of light industrial, marine, commercial, and residential uses to help foster a diverse, resilient local economy.
- **Robust Infrastructure:** Circulation networks to facilitate and serve knowledge-based, technology, arts, crafts, commerce, and light industry.
- **Urban Reconnection:** Accessible, interconnection with existing rights-of-way to the East, to the harbour, to the former industrial Rock Bay lands to the North, to Old Town and south to Downtown.
- **Social Diversity:** Constructed and curated urban amenities to support a changing demographic, individual and family living, creativity and entrepreneurship.
- **History as Inspiration:** Commemorated and celebrated First Nations presence, traditional trade and post-colonial, industrial, marine and manufacturing histories.

*Neighbourhood
Impacts and
Amenity
Contributions*

Positive urban design impacts are intended throughout the district's phased redevelopment, including the repair, reconnection, and expansion of a pedestrian-focused network of walkways, lanes, and shared-street rights-of-way. This project is anticipated to be of significant economic and social benefit to the immediate neighbourhoods as well as to Downtown and the City at large. The open spaces created will be one of the most important results of the Capital Culture District Plan and will be regulated by the proposed CD Zone. These benefits are part of the proposed Amenity Contribution, detailed in the subsequent Urban and Architectural Designs that will be subject to the City's Development and Building Permit processes.



Network of Publicly Accessible Open Site Spaces & Amenity Contributions

1. Harbour Pathway: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The new Harbour Pathway is a public connection between the existing Harbour Pathway to the south (closed at time of this writing) and the Harbour Concourse and Flour and Rice Alley to the east. In consultation with staff, the proposal has been updated to extend the Harbour Pathway along the entire project frontage. An alternate interim path (1b) will be provided if marine industrial use conflicts with public access north of the Harbour Concourse.

2. Harbour Concourse: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

A landscaped pedestrian route publicly connecting the Harbour Pathway to Flour and Rice Alley and Store Street, with an elevator for full accessibility to the quay.

3. Flour and Rice Alley: Volumetric Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

Located between two heritage buildings, Flour and Rice Alley publicly connects the concourse to Store Street and will frame the view towards the waterfront.

4. A Public Plaza - 'Street Meet Square': Volumetric Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

Located at heart of the district (the sunny corner of Chatham and Store Streets), the plaza design is inspired by rail lines that historically traversed the site. The plaza includes trees, seating, and special lighting and paving.

5. A New Art Gallery: (Air Space Parcel - Land Volume Amenity Contribution)

The proposed public art gallery fronts the plaza, which serves as an entry forecourt to the gallery. While the terms of an agreement beyond the current MOU between the Applicant and the AGGV are being finalized, negotiations with the City regarding allocation of value of the gallery site will continue as a separate process.

6. Mid-Block Lane: Volumetric Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The mid-block lane connects Chatham and Discovery streets and is a physical space between Phase One (the current parking lot) and future phases to the east. It will link a mid-block route south, to be part of the network of mid-block connections in the city. The lane will be for shared use by pedestrians and drivers, with building access along both sides.

7. Government Street Treed Promenade: Statutory Right-of-Way (Direct Amenity Contribution)

The buildings along the west side of the street will be set back to enhance the experience of the beautiful rows of London Plane and other trees. These trees will also define a linear boulevard park between the shopfronts of the commercial and residential buildings on the West side of Government Street.

Safety and Security

While Zoning does not explicitly regulate design aspects of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CEPTED), this Urban Design consideration is integral to the ideas of the proposed mixed-use CD Zone and Urban Design Plan. CEPTED principles are fundamental to the methodology of the Design Team, including concepts of defensible space, natural surveillance, all-gender and all-ages public spaces, day/night community culture, connectivity, and threshold capacity.

Transportation Circulation and Infrastructure

Collaborating with City Engineers, the Design Team's Transportation specialists have aligned the Plan with anticipated future right-of-way redevelopment. Access, circulation, and connection are critically important to the urban design, even at Rezoning Application stage, and have been given careful attention and coordinated with City staff throughout the process to date.

The Capital Culture District Urban Design Plan gives priority to pedestrian and cycling circulation as meaningfully integrated aspects of the Open Space network. In addition to the proposed plazas and walkways, the project is consistent with the following transportation policies:

- wider sidewalks throughout
- enhanced cycling facilities
- improved street landscapes and parking
- underground parking with provisions for paid public parking
- traffic-calming techniques throughout.

Utilities Infrastructure

The public rights-of-way and open space circulation network incorporates creative, landscape-based stormwater management techniques, considering rain gardens, public water features, and using site topography. Electrical power, water supply, sewer and information/communication infrastructure are the subject of close collaboration between specialists and the City Engineering Department. As a fundamental quality of Brownfield Site Redevelopment, the optimization of utility systems near new development is a sound and environmentally responsible strategy. To that end, locations, capacities, augmentation, and improvement of underground services will be determined and coordinated at the time of Development Permit and subsequent Building Permit Applications, as required by City regulations.

Histories and Heritage Preservation

The Capital Culture District project acknowledges, respects and will commemorate both indigenous and colonial histories of the site. The City of Victoria, mandating Victorian-colonial heritage preservation, has recognized Heritage Registered buildings located at 1824, 1900 and 1910 Store Street. Accordingly, they will be preserved for adaptive re-use in compliance with Heritage Guidelines.

Early History

For many centuries before European colonial presence, indigenous people lived and hunted in the area. The Lekwungen-speaking peoples (Esquimalt and Songhees Nations) shared the shores of the Upper Harbour and provided a visiting camp in the Rock Bay Area for other Nations for trade with settlers and merchants at Fort Victoria. This ended around 1860 when a smallpox epidemic afflicted many of the visiting aboriginal groups. The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, through the joint Matullia Organization, have re-acquired the former site of the BC Hydro installation to the South of the Rock Bay and have long-term intentions for the lands.

The Capital Iron property, DcRu-116 is a pre-contact archaeological site as described by Grant Keddie, Curator, BC Archaeology. In 1976, an archaeological excavation was undertaken during construction of a building. 133 artifacts were recovered, and it was determined that the site was first occupied in 260 A.D. to 424 A.D.

Post-Colonial/ Modern History

Industries lined the shore of what is known as the Upper Harbour and Rock Bay. Historical activities in the area included a tannery, sawmills, an asphalt plant (still operating), a propane tank farm, and a concrete batch plant (still operating). In the 1930's, uses on the subject land included coal sheds, rock bins, offices, a hotel, rice and flour milling, warehousing, ship dismantling, scrap metal salvaging, freight sheds and a railway yard.

Green Building

The inherent environmental impact of buildings and urban development is significant and is mainly guided by Zoning Bylaw and Building Code criteria. As an urban, dense, mixed-use development, the Capital Culture District is an environmentally sound approach to redevelopment. The plan embodies the following sustainable and smart-growth principles:

- Redevelopment of brownfield sites with remediation where required.
- Compact development served by minimum extension of utilities infrastructure
- Well-served by proximate public transit
- Served by good multi-modal network of public rights-of-way/ streets and paths
- Mix of living, working, services, commerce and recreation within a 15 min. walk
- Variety of housing types and tenures
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Parks and open space within 5-to-10-minute walk/roll of all residences

Community Engagement

On September 21, 2021, a Community Meeting (CALUC) was hosted by the Burnside Gorge Community Association Land Use Committee, with some representatives of the Downtown Resident's Association in attendance. There was a presentation by the design team and developer, followed by a question period. Topics raised by attendees were primarily focused on the final form of the development, and not details of the proposed CD Zone. The Chair of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria Board of Directors voiced their enthusiastic support for the project.

A revision to the rezoning application was made in June 2023 at which time both CALUC's were contacted and offered a presentation of the revised proposal. The CALUC members reviewed the submission documents and determined that another official CALUC meeting was not necessary.

At the May 2, 2024 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council waived the requirement for an additional CALUC meeting to allow refinement of the proposal to achieve a lower massing configuration (as illustrated in the current resubmission).

Advisory
Panels

The project was presented on April 27, 2022, to the City of Victoria's Advisory Design Panel (ADP) and on May 10, 2022, to the Heritage Advisory Panel (HAP) and passed in these instances. Comments and questions by panel members, covered a range of design subjects including building height, landscaping, connections to the Harbour, and heritage designation. Many are addressed in the updated submission under separate cover.

Committee of
the Whole

Following the May 2, 2024, Committee of the Whole Meeting, the proposal was revised to respond to Council direction and discussions with staff. Key updates include:

- Max. heights: 8 storeys west of Store and 14 storeys east of Store Street.
- Slight FSR increase (Block A FSR 2.05:1, Block B FSR 4.5:1) for an overall Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 3.14:1 from originally proposed 3.0:1.
- Additional residential floor area along Discovery Street.
- Provision of interim Pathway if Harbour Pathway closed for marine access.
- Streetscape improvements: grade-raised areas, higher quality paving, etc.

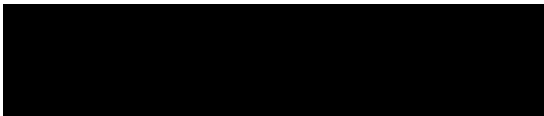
A full inventory of changes is included in the updated rezoning submission.

Conclusion

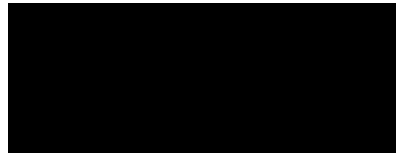
Reliance Properties, DAU and the whole Design Team have worked collaboratively with City of Victoria Planners and Engineers to bring forward a design concept that will, initially and over time, accommodate needed employment and a resilient mix of uses including housing, and arts/culture. The phased development will breathe more life into this significant urban area by improving public interface conditions and connections with surrounding blocks and the Downtown core. In preparing this application, careful consideration is given to the objectives of the City expressed in Victoria 3.0 as well as those of the representatives of the Downtown Residents Association, Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Association, and the Advisory Design and Heritage Advisory panels. The overarching intention is to put in place a Zoning bylaw that will permit the incremental creation of a vibrant, resilient, beautiful part of an Arts and Innovation District, proximate to Downtown Victoria as a catalyst for the Victoria 3.0 vision.

We look forward to continuing working with staff during the balance of the Rezoning process and, the subsequent Phase One Development Permit Application. If clarification or additional information is required, please do not hesitate to contact us.

D'AMBROSIO architecture + urbanism



Franc D'Ambrosio, Architect AIBC PIBC FRAIC LEED AP
Founding Principal



Erica H. Sangster, Architect AIBC FRAIC
Principal