

November 20, 2025

City of Victoria

Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Development Services
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Attention: Georgie Gordon, Senior Planner

Re: 1101 Yates Street Mixed-Use Development Proposal: Massing Rationale

This design rationale accompanies the application resubmission for the 1101 Yates Mixed-Use Development Proposal, and is to be read in conjunction with the updated application letter and responses to City Application Review Comments. The Proposal requests policy relaxations in building height and floorplate area in order to achieve a suite of community benefits, including: secured rental housing, secured housing affordability, licensed childcare space and enhanced energy performance. 175 rental homes are proposed, that include 20% accessible and 49% family-sized layouts. In addition to these compensatory offerings, the Project meets policy objectives through programmatic and urban design enhancements, outlined as follows.

West Tower: Form and Height

The foundational urban design response to the site is to divide the project into two mixed-use buildings: a high-rise on the Cook frontage, and a mid-rise building on View Street. This approach provides the transition in height and building scale appropriate to the Eastern edge of the downtown core. Multiple building forms were explored for the taller West Tower during the early conceptual design stage. These options were evaluated in terms of their urban form, shadow impacts, livability and constructability. This process led to the optimal approach of a podium and tower massing, each right-sized to their programs of use. The three-story podium is tailored to the BC General Employees Union program for meeting and office spaces, in addition to ground floor active commercial use. At three commercial storeys, the podium frames the street frontages at a comfortable scale, preserves daylight access into adjoining open spaces, and relates to the lower scale of development further East along View Street.



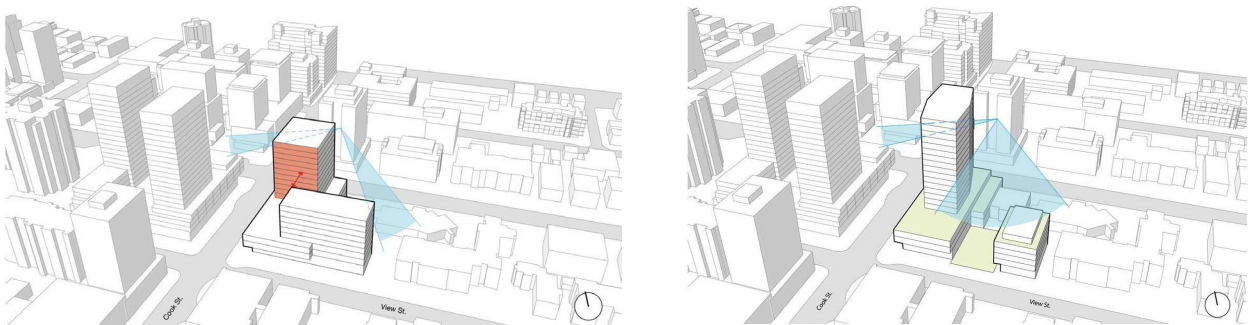
Sketch view of the commercial podium tiered decks on View Street.



Sketch aerial view of the proposal, including future development across Cook Street.

Overtop of the commercial podium, the residential tower is a clearly defined, separate form that connects to a generous South-facing amenity roof deck. This fourth-floor amenity space has excellent solar access and is at a comfortable elevation for all residents, including families. It is a high-quality space that accommodates a range of resident uses and activities and it will be used by residents of both buildings.

The tower is positioned and shaped to minimize its shadow impacts, with a slender East-West dimension and angled facades that align with compass North. The narrow dimension ensures the tower conforms to City guidelines for preserving daylight access for the surrounding public realm (refer to A1.5 Public Realm Shadow Impact Study). The high-rise tower position, and the overall strategy of stepping down to a 6 storey fabric scale, are also beneficial in terms of preserving views for neighbouring residential towers, particularly Harris Green Phase and the Nest at 1100 Yates.



View impact comparison between an alternate lower height massing (left) and the proposed massing (right).

The West Tower height is calibrated to the urban context and target housing yield. Policy points to a taller building form at the corner of Yates and Cook Street, at the Eastern end of the Secondary Harris Green skyline. In response to community and Planning comments, the building height has been reduced to 19 storeys. The associated

reduction in homes has been largely offset by adding one floor to the East building, limiting the net loss to 2 homes for the Project overall. At this revised height, the tower forms a gateway marker at the entrance to downtown and will be perceivably shorter than development across Cook Street. The West Tower will join the Harris Green Phase 1 development to frame the Cook Street public right-of-way.

West Tower: Residential Floorplate

The West Tower floorplate is optimized for livability, inclusivity and efficiency. The repeating floorplate has 9 suites per floor, in a range of sizes that prioritize family housing:

- (1) Studio
- (3) 1-Bedroom / 1-Bedroom + Den
- (3) 2-Bedroom
- (2) 3-Bedroom

Over 50% of the homes per floor are family-sized, and two homes per floor are fully accessible. The suite layouts are both efficient and comfortably sized. The floorplate is designed to achieve 85% efficiency, optimizing housing yield and livability through the following:

- All homes have generously sized private balconies, that are inset into the massing for privacy, functionality and comfort;
- The slender floorplate width ensures optimal daylight access into the suites;
- All bedrooms have windows;
- Daylight and view access is provided to the Elevator lobbies;
- Larger service elevator for resident moving.

The target unit yield, the high proportion of larger homes (family-sized and accessible), and floorplate enhancements, together combine as a West Tower footprint that is larger than City Guidelines by 86m², roughly equivalent to one family-sized home per floor (16 total for the building). For comparison, a guideline conforming floorplate could have the same slender width and overall length reduced by 6m, as illustrated in these diagrams:



Above: Diagrams illustrating the floor area and corresponding massing that exceed policy guidelines.

Reducing the tower length to meet policy guidelines, in our assessment, would not yield a material benefit to the building's shadow impacts nor to the perceived scale of the tower massing. To mitigate the additional floor area, the building's architectural expression has been designed to be human scaled and visually divided into vertically oriented sub-forms. The primary façade elements are the vertical groupings of units, separated by stacks of recessed balconies. The balconies visually divide the facades and provide clear definition of the living unit scale. The secondary elements are narrow horizontal bands that wrap around the Tower; the bands are visually subservient to the balcony stacks and provide finer scale and balance to the tower proportions. Further articulation is provided by the bends in the East and West facades, a geometric shift that will be emphasized by the soft reflectivity of the satin bronze-finish cladding.

The West façade on Cook Street is strongly divided by the inset to the Residential lobbies. This recess brings light into the lobby spaces and provides an important visual connection, between the street frontage and the residential floor levels. In response to Planning comments, we have studied whether a similar recess could be beneficial to the East façade. It was determined that the desired effect is achieved by the balcony articulation, and that the corresponding reduction in unit area, compromise to the portion of achievable family sized units and diminishment of unit functionality would be unacceptably detrimental to the Project.

The intended design result is an elegant, well proportioned tower that integrates positively with its urban context.



Sketch view of the Yates Street approach to the Downtown Core

East Building: Height and Orientation

At 6 storeys tall, the East Building establishes the transition to the lower-scaled residential fabric along View Street. This wood-framed building has a modest floorplate size, providing childcare space at the ground floor and 7 homes per floor on the typical upper levels: (4) 1-Bedrooms, (2) Accessible 1-Bedrooms and (1) 2-Bedroom homes. The sixth floor is setback as a penthouse level, containing four suites: (2) 1-Bedroom, (1) 2-Bedroom and (1) 3-Bedroom homes. The setback top floor eases the height transition to the existing neighbouring buildings, that are currently 2 and 3 storeys tall.

The East Building's North – South orientation benefits residents by minimizing North-facing homes and preserving South-facing views for lower storey neighbours in the 'Nest'. Critically, the building footprint optimizes open site area for the licensed childcare play area, which has excellent solar access and is a spatial extension of the landscaped public frontage along View Street. The East building locates childcare program space so that there is optimized access to both the outdoor playspace and the pick-up / drop-off area on View Street. The open area creates a green transition space between the taller West Tower massing and the lower-scaled residential neighbourhood to the East.



Sketch view of the Childcare pick-up / drop-off area, integrated into the welcoming landscaped public realm along View Street.

To accommodate the building program and functional connections to the outdoor play space, the building is sited closer to the North and East property lines. The North and East side yards are designed as landscaped buffer spaces. The current conditions along the North property line are a zero set-back medical services building (1121 Yates Street) and the rear surface parking lot for 1137/1139 Yates Street, a building with heritage significance. Along the East property line, there is a mature planted edge that screens the ground level under-building and rear parking areas for 1138 View Street. The South-East corner of the proposed underground parkade has been pulled away from the property line to retain a mature tree on the neighbouring property. The remainder of these setback areas will be landscaped over the parking structure. Although the setbacks are reduced from current policy guidelines, they provide needed visual buffering between the childcare, new homes and the current and anticipated neighbouring buildings. Should the adjacent properties to the North and East redevelop, the landscaped setbacks in this Proposal will interface positively with future perimeter block developments.

To conclude, the above rationale was presented to the Advisory Design Panel and received unanimous positive endorsement. Thank you for your continued attention to this application and collaborative engagement with the Applicant and Design Team. If you have any further questions or if additional information is needed, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Erica H. Sangster, Architect AIBC FRAIC
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