

March 24th, 2018
930 Fort Street, Victoria

Proposed Mid-Rise Residential

930 Fort St. Victoria, B.C.

Letter to the Mayor and Council
Sustainable Planning and Community Development
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Description of Proposal

The proposal for 930 Fort Street is to rezone the existing CA-42 Zone, Harris Green Commercial District, to a new zone more suited to the increasing density and evolving building framework of Downtown Victoria. The proposed zoning will meet the goals and objectives for density and building height of the Core Residential designation within Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP).

Government Policies

930 Fort Street is located in Downtown Victoria within the Urban Core (Core Residential Designation) of the Official Community Plan. The development proposal integrates with Victoria's Official Community Plan Values by ensuring an increase to the urban core housing stock, strengthening human / social resources, reinforcing Downtown Victoria vibrancy through engagement of the community / contemporary design, and working collaboratively with city planners and community stakeholders.

The Core Residential Designation defines building forms of multi-unit residential buildings to be up to 17 storeys in height with a total FSR being up to 5.5:1 for the project site.

The Harris Green Neighbourhood is Victoria's smallest neighbourhood in size and population but has seen the 2nd highest growth rate at 44% as well as being the second most dense within the city. With the rising population growth and residents looking for places to live and work, the proposed project for 930 Fort St. will satisfy the burgeoning demand for medium to high densities within downtown Victoria.

Project Benefits and Amenities

Project benefits for this development will include an increase of the urban housing stock within the core residential designation, streetscape upgrades to meet the transportation (including the currently under-construction bike lanes) and pedestrian mobility requirements within the Official Community Plan, and new commercial opportunities to better integrate and flourish with the local urban fabric.

- The Harris Green Neighbourhood will benefit from an increase in a variety of residential housing stock by being able to accommodate the anticipated growth and density that the City of Victoria is projecting for the future.
- Streetscape upgrades will be conducted to ensure continuous accessible design across the frontage as well as to meet Victoria's OCP and Victoria's Pedestrian Master Plan strategies.
- Commercial retail units at grade will be proposed to offer amenities to the building residents as well as to better engage the local community.



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Need and Demand

The existing zoning, height, and density for the site (CA-42) does not meet the current demands. A rezoning is required to better reflect the growing urban landscape of Downtown Victoria.

The proposed mid-rise residential building will meet the planning guidelines and local demand while falling in line with Victoria's OCP by providing a higher density project, expanding on local retail spaces, improving the vitality and livability of the public realm, and offering a well-designed and contemporary built form within the Downtown Core Area, while serving the daily needs of residents.

Neighbourhood

930 Fort Street is located east of 926 Fort St. (an existing 2 storey commercial building), west of 938/940 Fort St. (an existing 1 storey commercial building), north of 931 and 941 / 947 Fort St. (an existing 5 and 7 storey mixed-use developments respectively), and south of 937 View St. (an existing surface parking lot) and 1147 Quadra (an existing 21-storey residential building).

The existing site warrants rezoning based upon the dynamic status of the neighbourhood and the need to densify and improve the current streetscape and pedestrian realm. The proposed development will better relate to the local neighbourhood by better representing the visions and goals of the Harris Green Neighbourhood.

Impacts

Surrounding areas will experience a positive improvement from the development by engaging and benefiting from the ground-orientated commercial retail units, providing increased dwelling units for the area, and offering a contemporary streetscape and building design.

Several of the immediate neighbouring sites are under used and underdeveloped with respect to the OCP and Harris Green neighbourhood, specifically 926 and 938/940 Fort St., and 937 View St. These neighbouring sites will experience a growth of activity and use and a positive impact to local commercial businesses.

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

930 Fort Street falls within the DPA 7B (HC): Corridors Heritage Development Permit Area. The proposed development meets the Corridors Heritage purpose of revitalizing the area through a residential development with active commercial at street level. Multi-unit residential is encouraged to be intensified to medium-high density along Fort Street between Cook and Douglas St.



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The proposal complies with these guidelines by helping to revitalize the secondary arterial of Fort Street, enhancing appearance through high quality architecture responsive to the context, and enhancing the pedestrian and cycling experience through human-scale urban design, compatible with street function.

On October 25th, 2017 WA and the developer went before the Advisory Design Panel which unanimously supported the proposal and offered positive recommendations that the developer has implemented to the betterment of the project. These changes include increasing the end bay 'bump outs' to incorporate north and south facing windows to benefit the bedrooms located within the affected suites. The south podium height was increased to align with the existing parapet of the adjacent Lunds building. The south canopy over the café was pulled back to increase daylight into the proposed patio and permit more robust street level landscaping. And lastly, the common rooftop amenity was greatly enlarged and improved and moved to the roof of the building.

Safety and Security

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is important for this development as it will offer safety and security for residents and commercial users on-site. Strategies to reduce crime, the opportunity of crime, or the fear of crime to be implemented are:

- Dwelling units clustered together to create neighbour-to-neighbour surveillance
- Landscape design to allow clear, unobstructed views
- Walkways and entries are visible, well lit and overlooked by windows
- Windows constructed of clear glazing or glass block to overlook public/private spaces
- Glazed doors in stairwells and parkades lobbies, white or light colour paint schemes and elimination of deadends and sharp corners
- Mixed-use development to encourage the presence of people at all times
- Reduction of entrapment spots by the use of glazing in doors, and windows
- Commercial units on the ground floor to create an active streetscape

Transportation

930 Fort Street is located along the secondary arterial of Fort Street, between the secondary arterial of Quadra Street to the west and collector Vancouver Street to the east. Currently, the project does not meet the current Zoning of CA-42 and Zoning Bylaw Schedule C – Off-Street Parking and will rezone to better suite the vision outlined in the OCP.

Being located within the Urban Core of Downtown Victoria as well as being located along a secondary arterial and frequent transit route the proposal will manage parking by employing efficient parking strategies, reduced parking requirements and car-sharing. The Developer has entered into an agreement with MODO to provide the future strata council of the building with 62 MODO car share memberships – one for each unit. Each of these membership has a \$100 credit as an incentive for residents to make use of the car share program. This compliments the 27 off street parking spaces provided in the below grade parkade. These MODO memberships will be owned and managed by the strata council and provided free of charge with the \$100 credit to residents of the building as requested.

The City of Victoria is currently in the process of constructing bike lanes on designated streets. The Fort Street bike lanes are currently under construction. We have incorporated the City's plans for bike lanes into the included streetscape rendering. It is our hope that the primary modes of transportation for the future residents of the building will be foot and bike. Increased bicycle facilities (commuter and secured) above the requirement will be provided for residents. Bicycle parking will be located within safe and

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secure facilities onsite. The increased bicycle parking will make use of the existing and future network of Greenways.

930 Fort Street is located west of the Shared Greenway of Vancouver Street, 4 blocks south of the People Only Greenway of Pandora Ave. and 2 blocks north of the People Priority Greenway of Courtney St. No anticipated improvements to the Greenways will be resulting from this project.

Heritage

The existing building is not considered to have heritage status, as well as no heritage buildings will be affected by the new development.

Green Building Features

Green building features within the building will employ passive and active strategies such as efficient suite design to maximize livability, shading and overhangs across the facades, efficient use of materials and building products, use of contemporary mechanical heating and cooling systems, and high performance envelope and glazing design.

Infrastructure

Being located within the Downtown Core of Victoria, there is currently adequate sewer, water, sidewalks, roads, and parks within the area. Infrastructure improvements will be conducted as required by the City of Victoria.

Regards,



Barry Weih,
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