

June 7th, 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

Response to motion

The following motion/direction was given to staff for the above-noted project. Find the enclosed drawings revised to respond to the following recommendations.

That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to revise the proposal for consistency with the Design Guidelines, including the following specific items, and to bring the revised proposal back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting:

- a. *provision of distinct, well-defined retail bays, consistent with the context along Fort Street.*
- b. *revisions to the tower to address the uniform appearance, with particular attention to the north and side elevations.*
- c. *revisions to the scale and materials of the podium to provide a more sensitive response to the immediate context within the Heritage Conservation Area.*
- d. *address the concerns of the Downtown Residents Association regarding the lack of an overhead door for the visitor car park.*

Numerous revisions have been incorporated in response to the above items. Below is a brief description of these revisions.

- a. The retail bays have been further defined by incorporating "pilasters" at each of the southern corners of each of the commercial retail units. Further, the newly incorporated tile band described below incorporates a different colour above each retail unit providing greater distinction. The bays remain offset from one another and remain separated by the building entry.
- b. The uniform appearance has been addressed by revising the metal panel system. Specifically, the vertical white bands have been revised to be a three-tone metal panel palette.
- c. Numerous revisions to the scale and materials of the podium have been incorporated in order to provide a more sensitive response to the immediate context. These include,
 - Removal of the perforated metal screen from the podium.



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- Incorporation of terracotta tile at the podium. Each of the retail bays have independent and distinct colours.
 - The above-mentioned pilasters act to ground the podium to the street, in keeping with the Fort Street context.
 - The extent of residential entry canopy has been reduced.
 - The height of the parapet has been increased to act as a guard wall for the roof deck space above, making the podium higher.
- d. An overhead gate has been added to the P1 level to secure the visitor parking area.

Further, staff has requested that a minimum of 119 Class A bike parking spaces be provided. This is achieved and indicated in the attached plan showing 120 bike spaces as the bike racks come in pairs. This number of stalls meets and exceeds both the current and incoming bike parking by-law requirements.

Finally, staff has requested comment on the side yard setbacks. The site is small and challenging. Nonetheless, we have worked hard to have a generous rear yard setback in anticipation of the proposed development to the north. East and west setbacks are a function of the building core and the need to improve soil conditions adjacent to Lunds. We lose approximately one meter along the west property line (i.e., we cannot build our parkade to the property line) in order to protect the Lunds building. Doing so means the core is slightly off centre (i.e., shifted east about one meter). This has the effect of increasing the west side yard setback slightly above the desired minimum of 3m and decreasing the east side yard setback slightly below 3m. In fact, it is just the bump outs that are within the 3m on the east side. Following the advice of ADP, these bump outs were increased to allow for windows facing north and south in the bedrooms within the bump outs. The bump outs dramatically improve the livability of the units without having any real negative impact. They also better articulate the east and west elevations. A lot of thought was given to this issue as it was identified by staff very early in the process. The bump outs contain only bedrooms and limited glazing in the east and west directions (i.e., facing the side yard). The more abundant glazing in the living areas is predominantly north and south and any glazing in living areas which face either east or west is in walls set back further than 3m. While we understand that future development to the east (see below, unlikely any time soon) will need to contend with this, we believe it is relatively inconsequential. Our east setback at the bump out is over 2.5m. If there were to be development to the east and if there were similar constraints requiring a west side yard setback of 2.5m, that would mean a separation of 5m. Single family detached homes in neighbourhoods throughout Victoria are built less than 5m apart. In R1-G and R1-B (two of the most prevalent zones in Victoria) homes can be built 3m apart.

While "planning for the future" is sensible, it is unlikely that any development in the foreseeable future on the north side of the 900 block of Fort St. will occur. Specifically, directly adjacent to the west is 926 Fort. The property is approx. 40' wide with little to no redevelopment potential. To the west of 926 Fort St. is the front yard of View Towers. It is difficult to imagine any development occurring to the west. Adjacent to the east is a property (938 Fort St.) which recently underwent a very costly renovation following a fire and has long term leases in place. West of 938 Fort St. are four "half" lots (i.e., 30 feet in width each). The third (to the east) of these is 946 Fort St. which was recently extensively renovated. Thus, between 938 and 946 Fort St are two half lots (i.e., one 60' wide lot) and to the east of 946 Fort St. is one 60' wide lot. Neither with any real development potential. While we fundamentally agree with the philosophy of



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"planning for the future", it would seem likely that the foreseeable future will likely look very much like the present.

Of course, we would love to be able to further increase the east side yard setback (and all setbacks for that matter). We have tried multiple methods to achieve an increased east side yard setback and unfortunately, have been unable to achieve 3m. Due to the size of the site and the central circulation (which has been shifted west as far as possible), unit layouts are extremely tight. Following the prudent advice of City staff, we oriented all units to the north and south. This has made for very livable units, all with an abundance of natural light. The east and west elevations of the building are predominantly bedrooms. The reduced setback at the bump out of the east elevation contains two bedrooms with limited glazing. The portion of the east elevation that steps back contains a bedroom and living area in one corner unit and a living area in the other corner unit. Kitchens have been placed on these walls of the living areas. That is, while the setback may not be the suggested 3m, the building has been designed so that the east setback does not affect the livability of the units.

With the above revisions implemented we look forward to the project moving forward with staff and council support.

Regards,



Barry Weih,
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