



the Cook Street village and Dallas Road. The site is currently occupied by the Pacific Mazda car dealership and a pay parking lot. Directly adjacent to the west of the site are a single-story insurance agency and two multi-storey residential buildings. Across the street on Johnson, Yates and Cook, buildings vary in height from 1 to 17 storeys.

The site boasts proximity to some of the best amenities in Victoria with access by foot, bicycle and transit to schools, cultural centres, restaurants, shops and civic facilities. The harbour is an fifteen minute walk away, George Jay and Central Middle schools and Victoria High School are all within ten minute walk, and a healthy mix of street-side businesses and amenities are within a few minutes: Conservatory of Music, grocery stores, restaurants, cafes, drug stores and shops.

The property is split zoned. The western portion (43% of the entire site area) is zoned Harris Green District (R48) and the eastern portion is zoned Limited Service District (S1). The OCP designates the site as Core Residential and within *Development Permit Area 3 (HC) - Core Mixed-Use Residential*, anticipating multi-residential development along with other land uses, public amenities and services that help to develop complete communities.

The R48 zone permits mixed use residential and commercial developments up to 10 storeys but does not prescribe a maximum density through a floor space ratio (FSR) calculation. A "theoretical" FSR for these lands has been calculated using an approach confirmed in consultation with the City of Victoria and applied to recent development applications zoned R48. The "theoretical" density is calculated based on the building height and front yard setback regulations stipulated in the zone. This confirms a theoretical density of 9.8:1. The R48 zone has no parking requirement.

The S1 zone permits an FSR of 1.5:1 and a maximum height of 15m. However, as the site prepares to transition from its historical automotive use to meet the needs of the future community, the OCP and DCAP for this site identify a base density of 3:1, a maximum density of 5.5:1 and building heights of up to 15 storeys along Cook Street and 17 storeys in the mid-block of Johnson and Yates Street.

This proposal has been developed to meet objectives set out in the OCP and DCAP. The provision of housing in the downtown, plus the emergency services program help the City in achieving OCP Section 3, Plan Values 3.6 *Individual Well-Being*, 3.7 *Community Capacity Building*, and 3.11 *Adaptive and Responsive*. There has been a coordinated, collaborative process in planning for Phase 1 of the project between the proponent, multiple departments at the City, BC Ambulance and Pacifica Housing Advisory Association. This unique building program is only possible through careful, coordinated planning between the varied agencies and stakeholders (*OCP Plan Value 3.13 Coordinated Planning*).

Several of the OCP Plan Goals are addressed with this proposal, including those Plan Goals that relate to:

- *Accessibility*
- *Access to affordable housing*
- *A range of housing types*
- *Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest*
- *Victoria is a safe city*
- *Victoria is prepared to deal with known hazards and emerging threats*

Description of Proposal

The proposed development is a multi-phase, mixed use development to be constructed over a number of years, commencing with the Phase 1 along the mid-block of Johnson Street. Phase 1 proposes a 12 storey building (11 storeys

plus mezzanine) containing a first level and mezzanine of fire service and ambulance operations, a second level containing fire hall operations/administration and emergency operations centre, a third storey of office, 130 homes over eight storeys and two levels of underground parking. The balance of the development is envisioned to be a mixed-use development conforming to the DCAP design guidelines with building heights ranging from 14 to 17 storeys and uses consistent with the Core Residential OCP designation. The specific design for these subsequent phases will be brought forward as separate development permits at the time those phases advance.

Proposed Zoning

To accommodate this proposal, a site-specific zone is being requested that is generally in compliance with the OCP and DCAP. The overall density for the site being proposed is derived from the aggregate of (i) the current development potential for those portions of the site zoned R48 (which is greater than the maximum development potential identified in the OCP) and (ii) the development potential identified in the OCP and DCAP for those portions of the site currently zoned S1.

A site specific amendment to the OCP is required to permit the overall density proposed for the site, and the applicant feels this is supportable on the basis that the application is consistent with the Core Residential urban place designation and furthers the broad objectives and policies of the OCP.

Massing and Siting

The proposed massing strategy has been formed by applying the directions of the OCP and DCAP, community feedback and the program requirements of a post-disaster public safety building to the development potential for the lands. A detailed massing development study is included with the rezoning application.

The proposal contemplates building heights of 12 storeys fronting Johnson, 15 storeys fronting Johnson and Cook Streets, 14 storeys fronting Cook and Yates Street and 17 storeys fronting Yates Street, consistent with DCAP height guidelines. The overall site density proposed is 6.8:1. When the area dedicated to the fire hall is excluded, the overall site density is 6.26:1.

The proposal for a 12 storey building in Phase 1, in an area where the OCP contemplates a 17 storey maximum height, is driven by the structural limitations of a post-disaster building, while giving consideration to the existing row of 10 storey residential and mixed-use buildings across Johnson Street to the north.

The proposed massing for the site complies with the setbacks outlined in the guiding documents, stepping back away from the street at upper levels to ensure light and views are enhanced at street level. By treating the site as a cohesive development and creating a unifying raised podium with zero side-yard setbacks at lower levels, the massing at the upper levels can be reduced, resulting in more slender towers with greater separation for light and air for residents and at the street level. The raised podium approach with greater street level setbacks also creates wider street level spaces with semi covered outdoor terraces (an 2.5m average setback at grade is being proposed). The large floor plates of the raised podium provide for flexibility in programming, creating the opportunity for a variety of uses which results in greater vibrancy for the neighbourhood. Potential podium uses may include multi-level townhomes, apartments, live work spaces, offices, recreational and other uses.

In response to community and City staff feedback, the application has been updated to include the provision of a 250sm open space/plaza along Yates Street.

As requested by City staff, we have updated the rezoning application materials to show three different massing scenarios which illustrate examples of possible DCAP compliant massing solutions that could be brought forward for future phases through separate Development Permit applications. The massing of the remaining phases in all three scenarios demonstrates that the proposed site-wide density can be developed sensitively in a manner that conforms to, or improves upon, the DCAP guidelines for height, setback, building and street interface and building separation. All building massing as shown in the rezoning application illustrations comply with DCAP maximum floor plate sizes, with the exception of the residential portion of the Phase 1 building. This exceedance is due to structural limitations associated with the construction of a post-seismic structure and is described in more detail below.

The three massing scenarios also illustrate different possibilities for the open space/plaza location and orientation; corner location marking a gateway to downtown at Cook and Yates, linear open space running along Yates Street, and inset outdoor 'room' that would have buildings lining three sides with south side open to Yates Street. All options are located on the south side of the development, opening onto Yates Street and are 250sm in area. The open space/plaza will be on private land, cared for by the development, yet open to the public. We feel that the size and location on Yates Street are ideal for the neighbourhood requested public space for this development. At 250sm, the space will be large enough for informal gathering of individuals or small groups as well as space for potential spill-out of adjacent businesses. At the same time, the open space/plaza will be intimate enough that adjacent businesses can express some form of ownership over the space by way of overlook.

The idea of a mid-block walkway or interior plaza was considered by the design team. Although there are some good examples of mid-block walkways in Victoria's old town, we believe that this development on the eastern edge of the block at the eastern end of downtown does not have sufficient 'people energy' to make one successful. Without a network of mid-block paths to the north and south, a stand-alone mid-block walkway could detract from the urban life around the perimeter of the development on Johnson, Cook and Yates Streets.

Proposed Uses

In response to City staff feedback, the rezoning application is revised to propose only the following uses:

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Assembly | 10. Personal Service |
| 2. Assisted Living Facility | 11. Residential |
| 3. Care Facility | 12. Residential Lock-Off Unit |
| 4. Civic Facility | 13. Retail Liquor Store |
| 5. Financial Services | 14. Retail Trade |
| 6. Food and Beverage | 15. Small-scale Commercial Urban Agriculture |
| 7. Home Occupation | 16. Studio |
| 8. Hotel | 17. Utility |
| 9. Office | 18. cinemas, art galleries and places of recreation |

The above revised list of uses are intended to align with the use definitions in the Zoning Bylaw 2018, and to provide greater clarity regarding the scope of 'institutional' uses being permitted on the site as a whole (in response to community feedback).

Phase 1

Building Program

Phase 1 of the development is for an 12 storey (11 plus mezzanine), mixed use building that includes the Victoria Fire Department Headquarters, BC Ambulance station, commercial space, 130 rental apartments, all over two levels of secure and public underground parking. The residential 'building' contains 24 studio, 56 one bedroom, 43 two bedroom and seven three bedroom homes. The Victoria Fire Department will be the primary 'face' to the building, taking up the majority of the lower levels, including street presence. As such, the building has been designed to have a prominent civic presence.

Building Siting, Setbacks and Massing

The urban firehall requires that there be a 6 metre setback at street level for the apron, for some of the cleaning, daily check overs and maneuvering of apparatus will occur. As well as being a practical requirement of the fire department, this forecourt sets the building apart as one of civic importance.

The building meets the Built Form Policies described in DCAP, including the inclusion of a terrace to distinguish between podium and upper levels, recessed entries, reduced building bulk of upper storeys, and upper floors stepping back to stay within the 1:5 Building Setback Ratio that starts at the 20m level. As noted previously, the residential portion of the building exceeds the DCAP guidelines for maximum floor plate sizes. This is primarily due to the structural limitations of placing additional residential uses above the broad base of the firehall function in a post-seismic building that will be built to the newly adopted BC Building Code. The building is required to have uniform floor plate sizes and uniform building height surrounding the two elevator/stair cores. Any asymmetry to the floorplates and heights creates forces on the lower portion of the building that can not be accommodated. A detailed explanation of these limitations and the impact on massing is provided in a separate memo by Leon Plett of RJC, the project's structural engineers.

The three different program elements will stand out as unique, yet at the same time will combine to create a cohesive building with a modern take of the traditional tripartite expression of *base* (apparatus bays at grade), *middle* (VFD1 headquarters and office in the raised podium) and *top* (8 storeys residential building). The building meets the skyline with a floating flat roof with a tapered edge and exposed soffit.

Building Materials and Expression

The *base* (apparatus bays and entry lobbies) is occupied by the six firehall apparatus bays, two ambulance bays as well as two entry lobbies that lead to the VFD1 head quarters, office and residential occupancy above. The apparatus bays are visually and kinetically active spaces that will be highlighted by the glazed lower level and glazed bay doors. Entry lobbies will be articulated with the use of landscape forecourts, signage, lighting and highlight material and colour of the elevator and stair cores on the inside. The building base will have full height curtain wall windows with minimal mullion caps and dark framed glass doors in order to maximize transparency.

The *middle* (raised podium) is a two storey volume that houses the administration, the emergency operations centre and suppression crew areas of the Victoria Fire Department, plus one floor of commercial space above. This raised podium volume will be clad in textured cementitious panels on the east and west walls and cantilevered soffit, plus a prominent

glazed 'monitor' façade facing the street that will provide 'eyes on the street', and references the early modern expression of the existing firehall #1 building. The raised podium will have floor to ceiling window wall with vertical mullions and screening that responds to the building program and will add texture to the front wall, in keeping with the textured cementitious cladding.

The **top** (apartment) is an 8 storey residential 'building' that appears as 6 storeys by including recessed floors at its base and top. The base of the residential building sits on top of the two storey raised podium and includes walk out terraces from the residences. The base of the residential 'building' on the 5th level contains several spaces for residents to gather in informal settings; exterior dog run and interior common room on the north side of the hallway and a landscaped exterior patio and children's play area to the south. The residential floors will be clad in light coloured composite metal panels, combining multiple tones of similar finishes (reflective and matt finish, plus darker tones for accents). The recessed floors will be clad in the same metal panels, but in darker, matt finish to enhance the shadowing. The top of the building will have punched windows that will enforce the residential character and will contrast the window expression on the lower portions of the building, further enhancing the tripartite expression

Landscape

The entry lobbies on Johnson Street will be marked with soft and hard landscaping including benches positioned to view the apparatus inside and on the apron. Because the six firehall and two ambulance bays greatly limit the extent of at-grade landscaping, additional landscape has been added to upper areas of the building, on the north and south sides, providing amenity to the building occupants. The upper landscape which includes trees in large planters will reinforce the design concept of stacked buildings, with an elevated ground plane on the top of the raised podium.

Parking

The existing R48 zone (43% of total site area) does not require any car parking. The proposed Phase 1 building includes two levels of underground parking containing 116 parking stalls, plus 172 class 1 bicycle parking spaces. There are an additional 24 class 2 bicycle parking space at grade, near the entry to the apartment building and at the back of the parking ramp (south-west corner of the site).

Project Benefits and Amenities

Post-Disaster Public Safety Building

This project will achieve the OCP goals of replacing Fire Hall No. 1 with a new facility that meets the present and future requirements of the Victoria Fire Department for service delivery. The co-location of the fire service with BC Ambulance furthers the OCP's broad objectives that emergency response is coordinated and delivered efficiently and effectively. The public safety facility will provide an important civic presence on the street 24/7 and the post disaster nature of the building furthers the OCP goal of strengthening the resiliency of structures and infrastructure to seismic events through high standards.

Housing and Affordability

This project will initially bring 130 new homes to the Urban Core, in a form that is supportable relative to the OCP policy direction that the Urban Core is to accommodate and foster a greater range of housing options across the housing

spectrum, including non-market housing. The applicant is working with Pacifica to deliver the 130 homes as non-market housing, which delivery is contingent upon approvals from upper levels of government. A variety of unit sizes are being proposed ranging from studios to 3-bedroom homes, consistent with BC Housing Design Guidelines for suite sizes. Further details regarding the proposed affordable housing component are included with the application materials by way of a letter from Pacifica.

This project will also add a significant number of new homes in the subsequent phases, consistent with the strategic directions in the OCP for the Harris Green Neighbourhood to accommodate a significant share of the 50% of forecast new population and housing growth earmarked for the Urban Core over the next 30 years.

Sustainability

This project proposes a number of sustainable building features. Most importantly, it promotes social and civic sustainability, incorporating the important civic function of a new public safety facility in an innovative manner together with much needed housing. Together, these uses will play an integral part of the City fabric. The post-disaster nature of the Phase 1 building offers both public safety and longevity of the structures.

This project further serves sustainability goals as it is a higher density project located in close proximity to bike lanes, major transit routes and within walking distance to the Central Business District and numerous amenities.

The project will be fully compliant with the new energy requirements in the BC Building Code. For Phase 1, Step Code 1 will be achieved. It is anticipated that the residential component will achieve a higher level of energy efficiency due to the compact building form and absence of exposed concrete floor plates that are commonly incorporated into residential towers. These two factors greatly influence energy efficiency and building envelope durability.

Response to Community Feedback

Over the last nine months, information regarding the proposed development has been communicated through more than 25 meetings, reaching over 150 community members, through which process significant feedback was solicited and received from the community. During this extensive consultation process, certain common themes were identified:

- Need for adequate parking – This application responds by meeting the requirements of Schedule C site wide, despite the existing R48 zone (43% of total site area) having no parking requirement.
- Daylight and views through upper levels of buildings – The massing strategy for this application focusses the density in the lower levels of the building (the raised podium at levels 2-5) thereby allowing for smaller floorplates of the tower elements, increased architectural articulation and space between. DCAP tower separation requirements will be met or improved upon.
- Improved public realm/pedestrian experience – Again, the massing strategy and unified building massing over the entire site allows for the lifting-up of the podium level and provisions of 2.5m average setback at grade, resulting in greater area at the street level for semi-covered pedestrian spaces.
- Building heights – The proposal is consistent with the City's vision for building heights on the site as described in the OCP and DCAP with heights dropping towards the eastern border of the downtown core.
- Impacts of an urban fire hall – The Victoria Fire Department has worked closely with the development team on a building design that will align with the VFD's operational plan to mitigate traffic and noise through a variety of strategies, while improving responsiveness and efficiency between fire and ambulance services in the City of Victoria. At the CALUC held on July 30, 2018, Chief Bruce responded to questions regarding the impacts of

an urban firehall and detailed the VFD's efforts to mitigate impacts. In addition, a "good neighbour" agreement will also be implemented. The applicant shares the concerns of the community in this regard, as it will be a neighbour through the development of the subsequent phases.

- **Density** –The feedback relating to the density proposed by this application was received by the applicant from Downtown Residents Association Land Use Committee. Concerns expressed related to the overall density being inconsistent with the existing area and policy objectives of the OCP, and the potential for density in subsequent phases not being applied in compliance with DCAP. In response to these concerns, the applicant completed further analysis to confirm that the proposed density can be applied sensitively and in compliance with DCAP heights, tower separation and at grade setbacks, as demonstrated by the three DCAP compliant massing models for future phases included in this submission. The applicant anticipates that DCAP heights, setbacks and tower separations will be specifically included in the new zone. Additionally, the City's planning documents specifically target Harris Green Neighbourhood for the growth of housing. Specifically, new growth in the form of taller and denser buildings in the Downtown Core Area are proposed to be concentrated along the two intersecting corridors of Douglas / Blanshard Street and Yates Street in order to, amongst other things, strengthen the Harris Green Neighbourhood with a concentration of higher density residential and commercial uses centred on Yates Street. It is the position of the applicant that, because the density can be applied in a way that meets or exceeds DCAP requirements, that the application in its current form is supportable.

Safety and Security

The Phase 1 building has been designed to consider CPTED guidelines. The Johnson Street façade will be predominantly glazed, with views in and out of lobbies which will provide a level of safety for public passing by and residents entering the building. The apparatus bays will again be largely glazed with fire department and ambulance staff regularly on duty on the ground floor. The hard and soft landscape that is to be located at the two primary building entrances will be low and visually porous to ensure safety for both pedestrian/apparatus interface and CPTED reasons. Until future phases of the project are built, the east and south sides of the Phase 1 building are open to the Pacific Mazda dealership parking lot and Cook Street and Yates Street respectively. Future phases will also be designed to consider CPTED guidelines to ensure safety and security of the occupants of the development.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The project is well situated and serviced by City of Victoria infrastructure. Walkability and access to transportation for the project is exceptional, with immediate proximity to major transit routes and bike lanes. The location of higher density transit-supportive development along Yates street is consistent with DCAP objectives.

Conclusion

We are very pleased to be submitting this rezoning application for this comprehensive development on this prominent and important site on the border of the downtown core. The proposed development is compliant with the overall goals of the Official Community Plan and the Downtown Core Area Plan, and directly responds to many of the Values, Goals and Policies of these guiding documents.

Phase 1 of the project will include public amenities that address specific, pressing needs of the City of Victoria with inclusion of a new home for the Victoria Fire Department Headquarters, Emergency Operations Centre, BC Ambulance Station and the continued need for a range of housing types in the downtown area.

The assembly of multiple development sites into a cohesive development results in new opportunities for a mix of uses that could possibly include larger institutions or businesses. The proposed massing will allow for this sort of mix, while ensuring high quality public spaces (greater setbacks at street level, a 250sm plaza/open space), cohesive street wall (raised podium) and narrower upper floors that maximize daylight and view.

If you have any questions or require additional clarification of any part of the application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

HCMA Architecture + Design


Carl-Jan Rupp

ARCHITECT AIBC, SAA, OAA, MRAIC, DIPLOM LEED AP