



James Bay Neighbourhood Association

jbna@vcn.bc.ca
Victoria, B.C., Canada

www.jbna.org

December 17th, 2018

Mayor and Council,
City of Victoria

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

Re: 561-565 Toronto Street

Further to correspondence of November 21st, 2018, regarding the development permit application with variances for 561-565 Toronto Street, JBNA has received the attached letter from a resident who will be greatly affected by the proposed development. The application had been reviewed at the October 10th JBNA General Meeting.

In addition to the parking and possible safety issues associated due to vehicle egress and potential blindspots, the resident raises the issue of appropriateness of design and mitigation of massing given the existing neighbourhood character.

We ask that this submission be included in any City consideration of this development permit application.

Yours truly

Marg Gardiner
President, JBNA

Cc: Miko Betanzo, CoV Senior Planner
Conrad Nyren, Magellan Holdings Ltd
Alexander Teliszewsky

November 20, 2018

Dear James Bay Neighbourhood Association,

Re: Development Proposal for 561-565 Toronto Street

At the October 10, 2018 monthly meeting of the James Bay Neighbourhood Association (JBNA), proponents of the above development proposal, Conrad Nyren and Will King of Waymark Architects, presented their project ideas. The developer's intention is to construct a 4-storey, 24 unit condominium building with 22 stalls of underground parking and 36 bicycle stalls. Since this site is currently zoned R3.2 (4-storey, Multiple Family), the proposed land use and density are not of concern and there is no requirement for public input. This project is located only 150 meters east of James Bay Village centre, and is clearly within a transitional area of the neighbourhood. As a 30-year resident of Toronto Street, and as the owner of four homes located directly across from the proposed development (556, 548, 544 Toronto, and 415 Parry), I wish to draw your attention to concerns over the impacts raised by this project.

1. Concern for appropriate design
2. Concern over street safety and parking

FIRST ISSUE: The Concern for Appropriate Design

During the JBNA meeting, I had an opportunity to view (only) their rendering of the Toronto Street elevation. I was dismayed by its lack of definition and articulation.

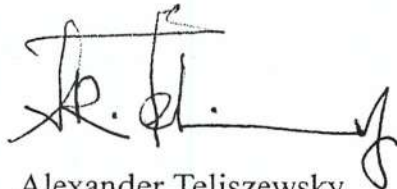
I am feeling unsure that the present system of development approvals would result in an appropriate response to existing neighbourhood character, and to adequately mitigate the visual impacts of height and massing. This proposal is in need of a second look given that it sits on the edge of a zoning boundary which has significantly different densities from neighbours across the street.

SECOND ISSUE: Concern over Street Safety and Parking

In addition to being a narrow one way street, Toronto Street is a Secondary Connector. This makes it an expedient choice as a quick link into the heart of James Bay. As a result, the increased noise and speed of its vehicular traffic has created a precarious condition to negotiate for pedestrian, children and their pets. Toronto would greatly benefit having its speed zones reduced to 30 KM/H, and supported by traffic calming speed bumps in the 500-block neighbourhood.

Due to the narrow street width, parking on Toronto has always been limited only to its south side. This issue is compounded by its close proximity to Victoria's Inner Harbour and Beacon Hill Park. I anticipate that the proposed development will exacerbate an already problematic situation. For this reason, I am not in support of any parking variances which substitute bike stalls for car stalls at this location.

Thank you for your consideration.



Alexander Teliszewsky

556 Toronto Street,
Victoria, B.C., V8V 1P2

cel. [REDACTED]
home [REDACTED]



May 9th, 2019

Dear Honorable Mayor and Council,
Re: Development Proposal for 561-565 Toronto Street

I wish to draw your attention to my ongoing concerns over the potential impacts of the above Development Proposal. The following letter is an update to a previous letter written to the James Bay Neighbourhood Association (JBNA correspondence, November 20th, 2018).

The issue of street safety and parking has been (partially) addressed by the Transportation Planner and the City's Department of Engineering and Public Works. The developer's amended plans are now in compliance with the City's requirement of 24 parking stalls. The developer has also agreed to the City's use of a portion of the Front Yard setback as a public walkway, facilitating the inclusion of a landscaped boulevard along the Toronto Street side of the project. These changes are beneficial; but our appeal regarding traffic noise and speed along this narrow Secondary Connector remains unaddressed. Residents of Toronto Street would receive benefit in having the speed zone reduced to 30 KM/H, and supported by traffic calming speed bumps in the 500-block neighbourhood.

The quest for the achievement of Good Urban Design in this proposal is an issue of much importance that remains unresolved. City staff at Development Services have been very helpful in communicating the Public's concerns while the project is under review. The conundrum is that the City seems to leave issues of Design Excellence, to the purview of design professionals who are in the employ of the development's proponent (a potential conflict of interest). In some instances, this lack of leadership leaves the Developer in charge of defining or interpreting "Appropriate Design". This is especially poignant when design issues impact the 'bottom line' of developers whose interests are solely limited to their 'financial gain'. In addition, the "Design Guidelines For Multi-Unit Residential..." (July 2012), reads like a short 'wish list' of unenforceable 'suggestions' making it easier for developers to simply ignore them.

I was recently dismayed to learn that in the second week of April (2019), Victoria's Advisory Design Panel had reviewed this project and recommended it to be sent to Committee of the Whole with No changes. The ADP's decision reinforces the impression that the City's natural leadership role is abdicated in

favour of the developer and his design professionals. It is especially evident in this proposal when considering how poorly its urban design responds to the physical, social and environmental objectives of our Design Guidelines.

During the course of these past six months, I had spoken with the Developer on a number of occasions, exchanging messages, drawings and ideas. He seemed genuinely interested, but always returned with excuses for not accepting any change.

At the end of the frustrating experience, it remains to be said that if passed by Council, this development will not serve the greater Social Benefit to the environment, the community nor to this development's future residents. With an estimated lifespan of 80-90 years, these shortcomings may (potentially) impose themselves on all concerned to the end of this century. I recognize and support that this neighbourhood is clearly in a transitional area of James Bay; and I am sure that these properties will be re-developed (for better or worse) in the near future. I oppose this specific proposal mainly on the basis of how poorly its design meets our "Design Guidelines". I leave the remainder of this letter with several examples that illustrate these shortcomings.



With an effective system of design review and evaluation in place, our 'built environment' (comprised of new and older buildings) would begin to strengthen our communal 'sense of place'. This photo (of 507 to 525 Government Street) illustrates the considerable respect and discourse that can be realized between buildings of different ages.

Design Guideline 1.1.1

New development should be compatible with and improve the character of established areas through design that is unifying, sensitive and innovative: ... through the use of appropriate forms, massing, building articulation, features and materials.

Design Guideline 1.2

Where new development is directly abutting lands in a different OCP... the design should provide a transition between areas in ways that respond to established form and character, and that anticipate any future development..

Design Guideline 1.6.1

Multi-unit residential development that directly abuts any residential building that is lower and smaller in scale... should: Provide a transition in its form and massing to lower density building forms.

Design Guideline 2.2.1

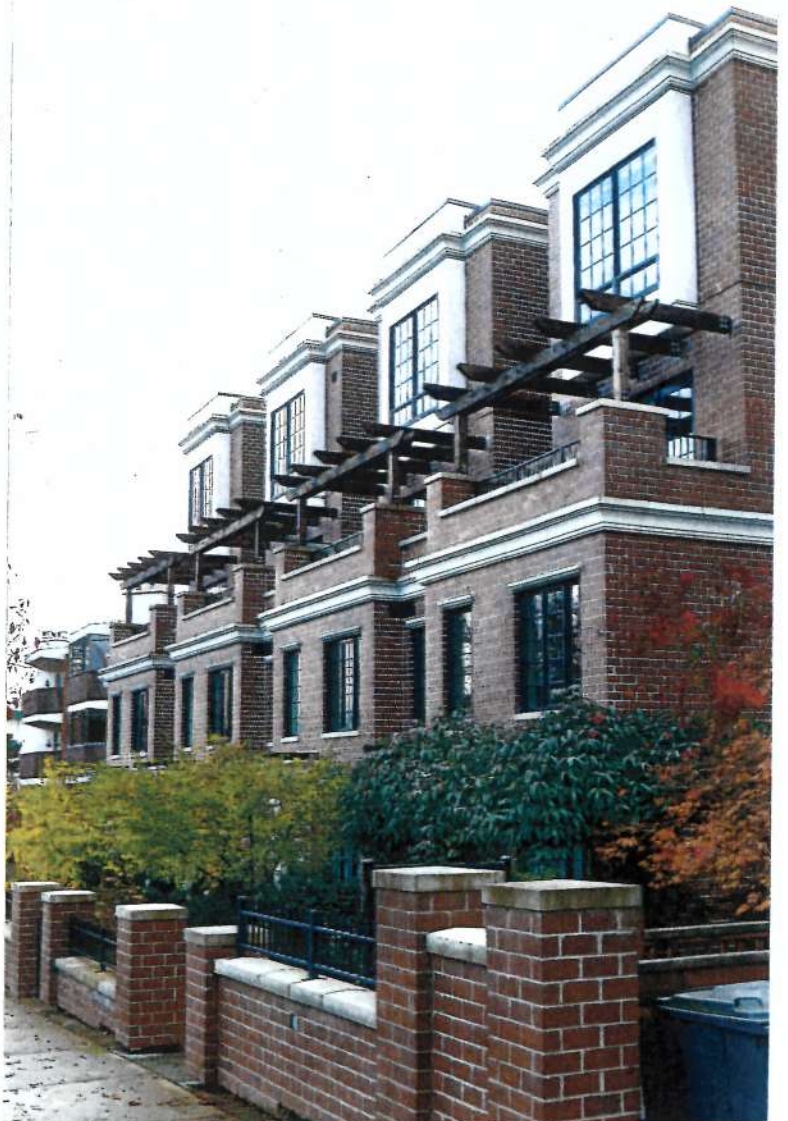
New developments should avoid long unvaried stretches of frontages... (by) massing that gives the impression of small blocks.

I had used drawings, photos and ideas to encourage the developer to break up his box-like proposal with an articulation of vertical bays containing balconies within the building envelope. These projecting bays are a reflection of existing house patterns on the Toronto streetscape.

These bays would be terraced at the second or third floor levels. The upper floors being setback a minimum of 2 meters in order to provide a welcome relief from the dramatic four storey cliff-edge drop.

This modulation of building massing and setback responds to the fact that there is a municipal zoning change which divides the south side of Toronto Street from the north side with a significant difference in density, height and size.

The photograph to the right is an illustration of an appropriate application of Design Guidelines for this planning issue.



Guideline 3.3

Perceived building mass should be mitigated through the use of architectural elements, visually interesting rooflines, stepping back of upper floors, detailing that creates rhythm and visual interest, or other design solutions.

Guideline 3.8

Mid-rise... multi-unit residential buildings are encouraged to be stepped in order to provide opportunities for balconies and rooftop terraces that take advantage of sunlight and views.

Guideline 5.8

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of private open space in residential developments in the form of courtyards, recessed balconies, terraced balconies or rooftop gardens.



In Summary, I wish to note that I am not opposed to this project's land use, density or height. My request is for a more appropriate architectural response: for a project that more fully embodies the intentions of our Design Guidelines.


Alexander Teliszewsky

556 Toronto Street
Victoria, B.C. V8V 1P2