

August 30, 2019

Mayor & Council  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC

Submitted by email: [PublicHearings@victoria.ca](mailto:PublicHearings@victoria.ca)

RE: 819-827 Fort Street – Redevelopment Proposal (825 Fort Street) Public Hearing September 5, 2019

To Whom It May Concern,

**I write to submit my support of the proposal known as 825 Fort Street**, Victoria, BC, located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lekwungen people, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations.

Downtown Victoria desperately needs high quality, diverse rental housing. **Our local businesses cannot rely on seasonal tourism alone, and the heartbeat of our city needs an infusion of year-round neighbors and patrons to keep businesses and jobs intact.** The proposed development offers a mix of unit types, positioned as work force housing for people who are willing to pay market rates to live downtown. Failure to incorporate mid-range rental housing in the city centre will result in the loss of the independent businesses that make downtown a special, desirable place to live, work and play.

The more new rental stock that becomes available, the more it will incentivize owners of existing rental buildings to make repairs and upgrades to keep their buildings competitive, resulting in safer, cleaner housing for everyone. When we consider the environmental impacts of our city, we often hear about cars, highways, cruise ships – but no one talks about the environmental impacts of operating buildings that were built decades ago, and whose systems may be reaching or past the end of their functional life. Owners of deteriorating buildings have two options – to make repairs and pass those costs on to tenants through inflated rents, or to do nothing and allow buildings to fall further into disrepair. **By encouraging new rental stock, City Council will be taking a quiet but important step towards reaching our municipal climate goals.**

As a long-time renter with two pets, I can attest to how challenging and costly finding safe, accessible homes for my family has been in the past ten years. Each time we move, we are pushed further and further out of the downtown core, while still paying a pet premium – fewer landlords are willing to accept pets, usually due to an isolated negative experience, despite the fact that pet owners are much more likely to stay in a rental unit longer than non-pet owners, and most of us pride ourselves on keeping a tidy home while respecting the building in which

we live. The developer should be applauded for acknowledging that animals have an important place in many homes, and for providing amenities to compliment this philosophy.

Downtown Victoria needs a place for folks who wish to better their downtown community by being responsible citizens, good neighbors and frequent patrons of local businesses. It is my sincere hope that Council acknowledges that 825 Fort Street is an important part of bringing a diverse, economically secure contingent of citizens and their families into Downtown Victoria.

Respectfully submitted to Mayor & City Council on Friday, August 30, 2019.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessi-Anne Reeves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jessi" and last name "Reeves" clearly distinguishable.

**Jessi-Anne Reeves**

Victoria, BC

## Alicia Ferguson

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**Subject:** RE: Proposed Redevelopment at 819-827 Fort Street

**From:** Kristine Liu  
**Sent:** January 23, 2019 3:10 PM  
**To:** Robert Fung  
**Cc:** Sydney Schwartz; Renante Solivar; Kristine Liu  
**Subject:** Proposed Redevelopment at 819-827 Fort Street

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to you in regards to the proposed Rezoning, Heritage Alteration Permit & Heritage Designation application at 819-827 Fort Street, that will be reviewed at Committee of the Whole this Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> (item E2 on the Agenda under 'Land Use Matters'). As we do not have an opportunity to make a formal presentation to the Committee, I would like to take this time to provide some background on the application for your reference.

We have worked with Staff over the past two years through several iterations of our application to create a proposal that satisfies many of the City's objectives for housing, heritage, character neighbourhoods and growth. **The resulting proposal that you have received is for a 10-storey building with 100-purpose built rental apartments, secured for the life of the building in the form of a housing agreement. The unit mix includes studios, 1-bedrooms, 2-bedrooms, and 3-bedroom homes.** The architecture of the building started with the retention of 2-historic facades at 825 Fort Street, and 819-823 Fort Street, from which the design evolved.

We note that Staff's report recommends 3-conditions:

1. Design amendment to accommodate additional setback at the top floor;
2. Design amendment to accommodate 12-short term bike stalls within the property site;
3. Preparation of legal agreements securing rental (to which we have agreed).

We are concerned about the design conditions proposed, as they have impacts that are not clearly outlined in the report:

### 1. Additional Setback at the Top Floor Above 30-Metres

We note that Staff are recommending a further step back at the top floor, for the portion of the building above 30.0m at the side and rear elevations. For clarity, this is a setback that will only affect the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, for portions above the 30m height guideline.

Please find attached a mark-up of the existing elevation for your reference.

This guideline in the DCAP is intended to reduce space between taller towers with more than 10-storeys and up to 45m. The additional height of this project that is over the 30m guideline is a direct result of retaining the historic building facades 819 and 825 Fort, which has higher floor to ceiling heights than a new residential building. Therefore the entire project is pushed 'upwards' requiring more height overall for a 10-storey building, above the 30m. This results in the overall height increase of entire building where only a portion of the top floor exceeds 30m.

Most importantly, the setting back of the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, even though only a portion of it exceeds 30m, reduces the number of rental units by 2 2-bedroom homes.

## 2. Short-Term Bicycle Parking

The current proposal includes 8 short-term bicycle stalls as part of the public realm, within the portion of the sidewalk that will be widened as part of the mid-block crosswalk adjacent to 825 Fort Street. The City's new Schedule C has an increased requirement for 12 short term bicycle stalls (from 8 under the previous Schedule C, which the project was designed to). Staff are requesting that the entirety of the new short term bicycle parking requirement is contained within the property.

The ability to accommodate short term bike parking within the property is very difficult in mid-block infill projects such as this one, especially with retained existing heritage facades and a strong planning mandate for continuous and active commercial storefronts at the property line. Any publicly accessible bike parking located within the site has a very negative impact on the retail space and storefront continuity.

With the oversupply of long term bike parking within the project (we have a surplus of 21-long term bike parking spaces), we suggest a potential solution would be to designate the residential requirement for short-term spaces internally within the currently designed bike parking area of the building. In practice, a residential guest or visitor would be escorted by the resident to the short term bike parking area in the main floor of the building.

For the commercial portion of the building, as the project does not introduce any new commercial space than what is currently existing, we ask that the City relax the requirement for commercially-designated short term bicycle stalls for the project. In addition, there is a tremendous amount of short term bike parking within the 800 Block of Fort Street already, as part of the public realm and the City's Fort Street Bikeway Plan. Alternatively, we would continue to propose that the commercial requirement for short term bicycle stalls can be accommodated as part of this projects newly constructed public realm, if Staff believe that there is not enough capacity on the street to accommodate the short term bicycle parking for commercial users.

We believe this solution would enable the frontage of the building to continue and maintain the historic pattern of storefronts that are core to the identity of this neighbourhood.

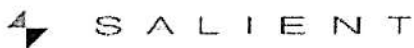
Thank you very much for your consideration of this application and for the above. If you have any questions in advance of Thursday, please do not hesitate to give me a call at 604.818.7210.

I look forward to meeting you tomorrow.

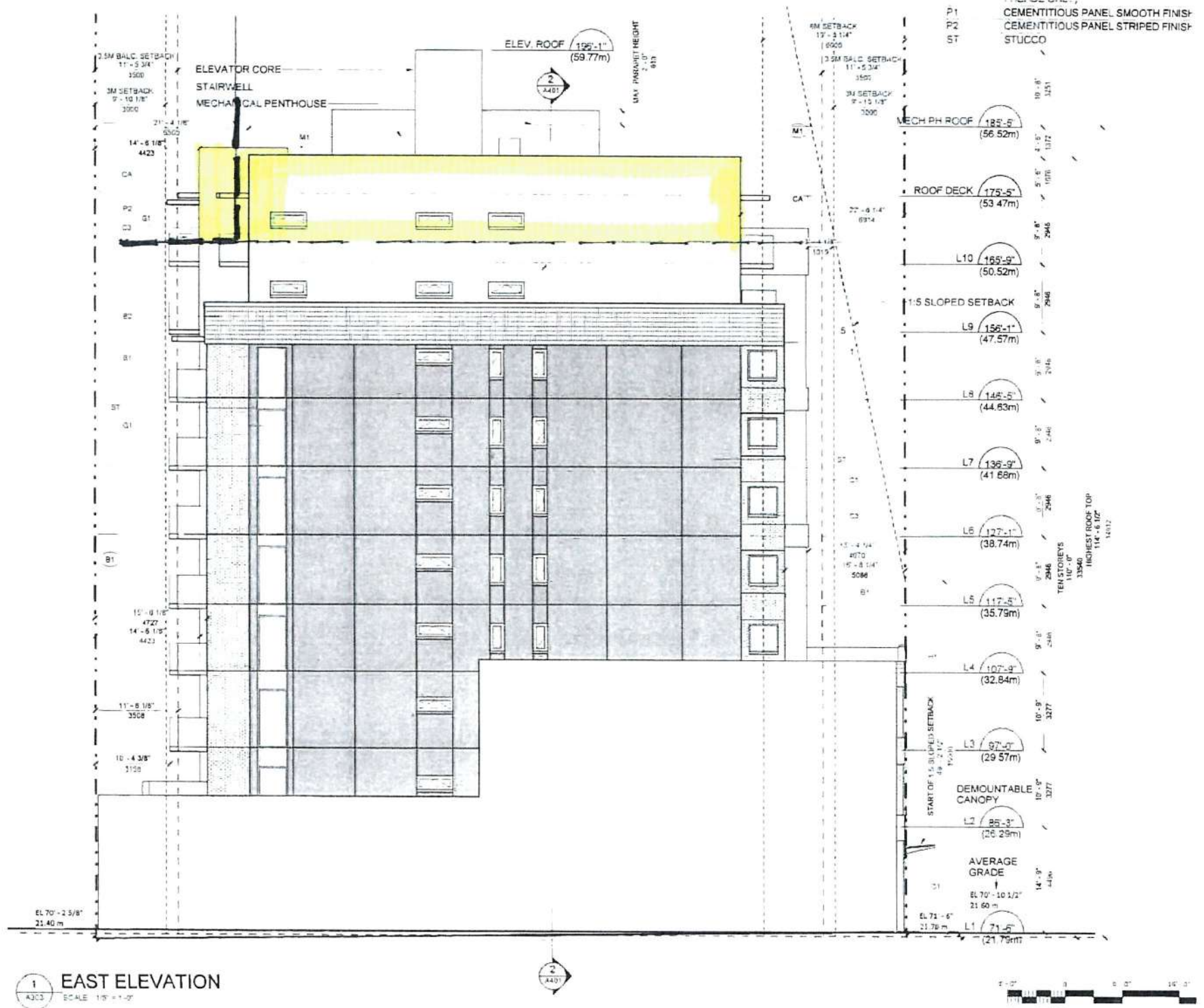
Thank you, and best regards,

Robert Fung

Robert Fung  
President



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3.5M BALD. SETBACK  
11'-5 3/4"

3M SETBACK  
9'-10 1/8"

ELEV. ROOF 195'-1"  
ELEVATOR CORE 77m  
STAIRWELL  
MECHANICAL PENTHOUSE

MAX PARAPET HEIGHT  
4'-0"

3.5M BALD. SETBACK  
11'-5 3/4"

3M SETBACK  
9'-10 1/8"

- H3 PARGED HISTORICAL BRICK
- M1 METAL
- M2 METAL LOUVER CHARCOAL
- M3 METAL MESH GUARD
- M4 METAL GARAGE DOOR CHARCOAL
- M5 MULLIONS CHARCOAL
- M6 MULLIONS COMOX GREEN (B19 HERITAGE FACADE ONLY)
- P1 CEMENTITIOUS PANEL SMOOTH FINISH
- P2 CEMENTITIOUS PANEL STRIPED FINISH
- ST STUCCO

MECH PH ROOF 195'-5"  
(56.52m)

ROOF DECK 175'-5"  
(53.47m)

L10 155'-9"  
(50.52m)

L9 156'-1"  
(47.57m)

L8 146'-5"  
(44.63m)

L7 136'-9"  
(41.68m)

L6 127'-1"  
(38.74m)

L5 117'-5"  
(35.79m)

L4 107'-9"  
(32.84m)

L3 97'-0"  
(29.57m)

L2 86'-2"  
(26.29m)

AVERAGE GRADE  
EL 70' - 10 1/2"  
21.60m

L1 71'-6"  
(21.79m)

SECONDARY FACE  
98' 10 1/2"  
30.10m

HIGHEST ROOF TOP  
114'-5 1/2"  
34.90m

PRIMARY FACE  
105'-5 1/2"  
32.07m

PRIMARY FACE  
107'-11 1/8"  
32.75m

STREETWALL HEIGHT  
38'-6 1/2"  
11.74m

EL 71' - 6"  
21.79m

PARKING ENTRANCE

DEMOUNTABLE CANOPY

PRIMARY FACE  
117'-8"

M5 M1 M3 M2

M5 M1 M3 M2

1 NORTH ELEVATION

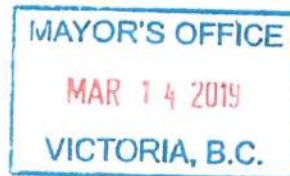
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

0' 0" 10' 0" 20' 0"

1/8"

From: Livia Meret

To: City of Victoria  
Mayor and Council



428 Kipling Street

Victoria, BC,

V8S 3J8

March 9, 2019

**RE: Development Proposal for 819-827 Fort Street**

Dear Mayor and Council,

This is to register opposition to the development that is currently proposed for 819-827 Fort Street. We are dismayed by the sheer mass of what is proposed for the site. Currently, Fort Street is relatively low rise with lots of light and considerable openness, all of which would be lost by the various development proposals along Fort Street. We expect City representatives to stand firm and to be prepared to recognize that turning the Cityscape into a concrete jungle is not an acceptable response to our current challenges, whether that be lack of affordable housing, homelessness, loss of green space, loss of parking space, and loss of public amenities.

We oppose any departure from Official Community Plan (OCP) zoning and land use requirements currently in place for that site. OCP's should not be given "lip service" as something to be worked around. Nor should they only be "official" until the next developer comes along. They are intended to guide development not by exception but by application. This is true throughout the City and particularly in its historical areas.

There is absolutely no reason why OCP standards should not apply, both in terms of height, density and parking requirements especially. We routinely walk, sometimes drive, sometimes bus up and down Fort Street to and from home to downtown for work. From personal observation, there's already a lot happening in those blocks of Fort Street, particularly in the vicinity of Blanshard, including a left hand turning lane, 2 way bike lanes, pinched and heavily used bus, truck and car lanes. It is already seriously challenging to travel those blocks.

The sheer mass of the proposed development will only make those issues much worse. Further, the City should insist on adequate parking, as well as adequate provision for access by emergency and commercial vehicles, including safe pull-ins for passenger pick-up and drop-off. The problem is that, at that location, this is not really possible without seriously interfering with others making use of those particular blocks of Fort Street.

However, perhaps most concerning is the impact that such an extensive development would have on the Fort Street corridor, including its historic characteristics and open feel. Our vision for Fort Street would be that the current height profile, (existing) density, parking and setback requirements be maintained. No concrete jungle, no blocking of views and no dominating of the streetscape.

We do not want to see another development approved which would overwhelm the existing character of Fort Street, such as has occurred at the corner of Fort & Cook Streets. Too high, too dense, too many unnecessary relaxations of City requirements including setbacks, and on a street that otherwise has managed to maintain a relatively low profile for the most part, as well as for decades maintaining light and openness unrestricted by high rises, easily strollable and with historic resonances.

With construction projects, including many high rises everywhere in the City including the immediate vicinity, we are urging the City to be thoughtful in how it approaches proposed developments. The City's residents deserve proper respect, including proper application of OCP principles.

Given the extensive development that has occurred in only the last 5 years, and which has been referred to as occurring at a "blistering" pace, with more of the same proposed for the next 5 years, existing residents are and will be paying the price in terms of loss of community, loss of amenities, loss of green space, etc. And for what market? Much of what is proposed, including at this location and other lots (e.g. along Cook Street where even more intensive development is proposed), is altering the cityscape to the detriment of its livability, accessibility and urban environment.

There's a reason why development is proceeding at such a pace: a proverbial gold rush fueled by expectation of increased profits tied to whatever OCP amendments will be secured. This should not be allowed to dominate over the public interest as protected by the OCP. Most of what is proposed is at market prices, not the much touted "affordable" housing required for the longer term. Even in the case of so-called affordable



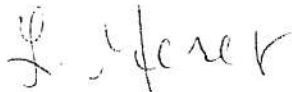
housing, the concessions that the City makes far exceed what we receive in return.

Also, there are high rise developments being constructed on every street paralleling Fort Street, such as on the back side of these same streets along View Street. Fort Street certainly doesn't need to add yet another high rise. Enough already! Stop this uncontrolled development!

Just a few summary points with respect to the development proposal:

- In no way should the City accept inadequate parking. There should be sufficient parking spaces required for each unit (no less than one per residence, as well as adequate spaces for access, as noted above). And if parking is not taken up by residents, there will surely be others prepared to rent those spaces as parking is being lost without being adequately replaced, particularly in that area.
- No relaxations to setbacks. Fort Street should continue with wide boulevards. Business owners have already sacrificed enough.
- Maintain consistency with the current OCP, which apparently is for no more than 6 stories at that location. Any new development should be no higher than other nearby historical buildings in order to preserve the historical surroundings on that street.
- Limit height and density so as to not darken the street with the shade from concrete high rises, nor add to traffic congestion and create further gridlock. Provide adequate space for access, without loss of public parking.
- Maintain openness, access to light and add possible green space.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'L. Meret' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Livia Meret