



Mayor Helps and Council
 City of Victoria
 No.1 Centennial Square
 Victoria, BC
 V8W 1P6

January 10th, 2020

Re: Rezoning for 1124 Vancouver, 941 View and 953 View Sts.

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

The DRA LUC hosted a CALUC meeting for this application on 28 August 2019. Twenty-two people registered their attendance at the door. Mr. Sandro Mancini, Architect and Mr. Jason Gordon of J. Gordon Enterprises conducted the presentation and answered questions from attendees.

Based on the information the applicant provided at the meeting, we understand the project includes the following:

- Demolition of three existing commercial buildings;
- Rezoning from Commercial to Residential;
- The project meets all requirements for density, height and setbacks, etc as per the OCP and DCAP;
- Six- storey (22.4 m) wood frame construction with masonry cladding on the street-facing frontages, transitioning to metal panel cladding facing the internal courtyard with an FSR of 3.25;
- Grid-like façade to reflect the use behind it to create “modules” that include Juliet balconies;
- There are 136 rental units comprised of 7 garden suites along Vancouver & View Sts, 30 studio (360 sqft), 77 one-bedroom (350 sqft), 16 two-bedroom (675 sqft), and 6 three-bedrooms units (965 sqft).
- Single storey bike pavilion with urban agricultural rooftop for tenants’ access and use (which qualifies as open space);
- Have started conversations with car share programs;
- Landscaping includes creation of 15-foot rain gardens on both View St and Vancouver St;
- Part of parkade is 5 feet below grade with the remainder above grade with the entrance on View St;
- Parking variance requested from the required 51 stalls to 41 stalls;
- The applicant states that while the project is market rental, it is also affordable, and that the City has had “two or three good looks” at this project and are satisfied with using the lower parking/unit numbers outlined for affordable housing under Schedule C to calculate parking requirements; and,

- No other variances were identified.

Comments and concerns raised at the CALUC public meeting:

- Elevations are stark and stern. Massing is challenging; needs more articulation. Break down the corners.
- Building materials: the use of brick is appreciated as a high quality material. The colour of brick is raised as to whether or not it is too dark. Hardie plank panelling comes in a broad choice of colours. No colour has been selected to date.
- Is the spacing between proposed building and existing/future buildings adequate;
- Provision of green space for public vs tenants' use, or lack of, on private vs public lands;
- Unit mix and tenure: discussed with some differing opinions about whether there should be more larger units. If these are to be market rental in perpetuity, then if the mix is wrong, or the demand for rental doesn't materialise, then price of rent may come down.
- Will there be sufficient alignment of this project with Vancouver St bike lane/shared greenway project in terms of access, landscaping, road design, etc.
- Repeated and strong concerns regarding deficiency of onsite parking for this project. As applicants continue to request parking reductions in this area, it puts greater pressure on street parking in the immediate area and in adjacent neighbourhoods.
- Applicant maintains that the units can be both market and affordable, and seems unfamiliar with the City's definition of "affordable housing". This lack of clarity represents a challenge in the conversation.
- Applicant insists that the parking requirement calculation relying on lower numbers provided for affordable housing under Schedule C is correct and supported by the City.
- Bike parking: there are 157 bike stalls which is in accordance with Schedule C.
- Questions regarding timing and construction process reflect construction fatigue in the immediate area.
- Building management: The applicant can't commit to whether there will be a resident manager for this building or not.

A number of residents' issues and concerns remain unresolved and the need for second CALUC meeting was raised at the meeting. The DRA LUC hopes that the applicant will provide the necessary answers and bring clarity to those items not addressed sufficiently during this meeting.

Sincerely,



Ian Sutherland
Chair Land Use Committee
Downtown Residents Association



Mayor Helps and Council
City of Victoria
No.1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

January 14th, 2020

Re: Rezoning for 1124 Vancouver, 941 View and 953 View Sts.

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

The DRA LUC hosted a second CALUC meeting for this application on 6 November 2019. Fifteen people registered their attendance at the door. Mr. Sandro Mancini, Architect and Mr. Jason Gordon of J. Gordon Enterprises conducted the presentation and answered questions from attendees.

Based on the information the applicant provided at the second meeting, we understand the project now includes the following **changes** or **refinements**:

- An 8000 sqft wing has been added along the west property line to include an additional 18 rental units;
- There are now 154 rental units as opposed to 136 and the project has an FSR of 3.39 as opposed to 3.25;
- Some articulation has been added to the northeast corner at View & Vancouver;
- There is a small indoor amenity space off the lobby;
- Masonry façade will be a grey-white brick laid in a more contemporary pattern, a stacked bond pattern. The brick system will be detailed with metal reveals that create datums at the floor lines;
- The bike pavilion has a capacity of 124 bike stalls but there are 177 bike stalls provided.
- The parkade design and capacity is unchanged.
- Applicant now states they are required to provide 56 stalls as opposed to 51 stalls. Of the 41 parking stalls. Ten stalls will be electric car charging stations: 5 for visitors and 5 for residents.
- No discussion, update or commitment made regarding a car share program.
- The applicant continues to represent that while the project is market rental, it is also affordable housing.
- Parking variance increased from 10 to 15 parking stalls; and,
- No other variances were identified.

Comments and concerns raised at the CALUC public meeting:

- After two CALUC meetings, the applicant still does not clearly distinguish between market, below-market and affordable housing and cannot identify for the community where this project will fall in the housing spectrum.
- Regardless of the tenure of the units, the applicant has not confirmed that he will commit to a housing agreement with the City.
- The applicant's calculation for required parking is incorrect. The applicant based their calculation on the numbers for affordable housing under Schedule C. There has been no commitment to meet the City's target for affordability, so the required parking is 97 stalls. As such, the parking variance provided to the community is also wrong. The parking variance should be requesting a reduction of 56 stalls.
- Insufficient onsite parking will contribute to the ongoing parking crisis downtown for residents as they are forced to find street parking in neighbouring streets and neighbourhoods. Regents Park has a parking spot for every unit, yet there are always notices on the notice board about people looking for a second parking spot.
- Residents will continue to own cars, potentially converting to electric vehicles, which will continue to drive the demand for onsite parking.
- In response to questions regarding housing affordability, the applicant suggested he'd like to "give 15% of the units to specific defined groups that are struggling in the community right now". But until they "know what the City is going to agree to" he can't know how much he's willing to give. He stated that the City would ultimately define how affordability is defined. And if they go down the path of affordable, subsidized units at all, he "would suspect that would open up even less parking".
- With regard to the issue of bike parking, the applicant specified that the bike pavilion has a capacity of 124 bike stalls but there will be 177 bike stalls provided. It is unclear where the other 53 bike stalls will be located in the project.
- There is a lack of green space in the community and the proposed green space for this project is internal to the building and closed off from public access and use. There is too much construction with building to the lot lines and not providing any external green space. The green space is pleasant to look at but it's not really usable there's nowhere to sit down, there's nothing to do in it. It may be relaxing to the eye but it's not usable to the ordinary resident passing by.
- Building massing and design remains problematic. Attendees described the building as a box with bland and repetitive facade. The lack of balconies is also seen as problematic.
- The inclusion of the new 8000-sqft wing on the west property line will decrease the liveability of the units facing into the courtyard.
- Unit mix requires more two bedrooms to address affordability for families and people looking to share units. Happy to see townhouses on street level with gardens so that they will provide some sense of greenery, even though they remain for private use.
- When asked if parking is the only variance being requested, the applicant stated that "There is question about the setback on the rear property line but we haven't got confirmation from our planner yet about whether it's a variance or it's conforming". The applicant noted that this is in relation to the fact that the parkade goes right to the west property line and rises up for five feet.
- The ambiguity around housing affordability, the parking variance and any other variances represents some key information not being presented to the community and the applicant didn't realise that missing information or substantial changes to an application can trigger the need for another CALUC meeting.
- There were also several comments reflecting a range of concerns regarding the problems with the public consultation process with respect to incomplete and inaccurate information being supplied to the community at CALUC meetings and the failure of the City and developers to adhere to the OCP. These continue to contribute to and exacerbate construction fatigue and meeting fatigue and highlight the need for greater rigor in the process.

After two CALUC meetings, a number of substantial issues and concerns remain unresolved and the information provided to the public has been incomplete and in some cases incorrect. The need for a third CALUC meeting was raised at the meeting.

The DRA LUC hopes that the City will ensure that the applicant will provide the necessary answers and bring clear, comprehensive and accurate information to the community at a future CALUC meeting. In the meantime, the DRA LUC will **postpone** any additional CALUC meetings for this project until after the applicant takes the proposal to the Advisory Design Panel meeting and revised plans are submitted to the City for consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Sutherland', written in a cursive style.

Ian Sutherland
Chair Land Use Committee
Downtown Residents Association