

From: Robin Bayley [REDACTED]
Sent: July 15, 2021 3:31 PM
To: Engagement <engage@victoria.ca>
Subject: For Planning - green wall for huge new development

Re. July 15 COTW. E. 2 903, 911 & 1045 Yates, 910 View and 1205 Quadra: Rezoning App. No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates, 910 View and 1205 Quadra and Associated OCP Amendment, Development Permit with Variances App. No. 00150 for 1045 Yates (London Drugs) (Harris Green)

Council included in the referral motion a goal of making the plaza space more park-like. Would you pass on to Charlotte Wain, Senior Planner and Karen Hoesse, Director the idea of making a green wall part of it, to minimize surface space being lost, while contributing to the restfulness, sound absorption and tranquility of the space? The more planted area, the less space for people with disabilities to manoeuvre.

Thank you.

Robin M. Bayley
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Victoria, BC. V8V 4C9
Home: [REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Chris Gower

A R C H I T E C T

Urban Design Planner

MAIBC FRAIC LEED^{ap} MCIP RPP

1124 Fort Street



July 14 2021

Opposition to the building heights proposed for the two Harris Green Village & Harris Victoria Chrysler/Dodge redevelopment projects

Attention Mayor Helps, and City of Victoria Councilors Alto, Andrew, Dubow, Isitt, Loveday, Potts, Thornton Joe, Young

Your Worship and Victoria Councilors,

I write in strong concern and opposition to the heights and building types proposed for the two Harris Green Village & Harris Victoria Chrysler/Dodge redevelopment projects – there is no necessity to allow such greatly extended residential towers in Victoria – stick to moderation, and to building forms sympathetic to the character of this City.

One of my chief assignments as Senior Planner for Urban Design in Victoria for the preparation of the Downtown Core Area Plan was to establish criteria for patterns of urban intensification and building types suited for growth for over thirty years - for an enlarged, inclusive, prospering - and welcoming downtown.

The city centre would face both challenges and opportunities: the addition of over ten thousand new residents, plus considerable commercial development – in the order of over one million square meters of new building floor area – all in the area bounded by Bay, Superior, and Cook Streets, and by Victoria's Harbour – an area, continuing to the north, with potential to accommodate over half of the City's anticipated growth for over fifty years.

How to proceed: how to preserve a vulnerable historic downtown – how to integrate new building forms in a downtown celebrated for its pedestrian scale and fine-grained streets - how to complement the compact geography of the City - how to maintain good faith with generations of Victorians long decrying abruptly tall buildings - how to safeguard and generate qualities identifiable and distinctive for Victoria? Increases in height and density were inevitable – but how to moderate and seek compatible urban qualities - suited to this town?

Four differing options for urban form were considered: In-Town, Across-Town, Up-Town, Cross-Town. After a year of public consultations Cross-Town was

selected as the most coherent and effective strategy – to strictly retain the historic low-scale Harbour, Oldtown, and China Town districts, while featuring a back-drop of two spines of new growth - a dominant corridor between Douglas and Blanshard Streets, pulling development northwards - and a more modest secondary corridor centered on Yates Street, helping to fill-in the Harris Green neighbourhood.

Building heights were constrained, with a maximum of the 72 meter height Hudson project, then recently approved, by the Council of the day, to support rehabilitation of the Hudson's Bay Building – and seen as a commencement of the northward, primary corridor. Heights and densities would then diminish, stepping down block by block, towards surrounding neighbourhoods.

Height allowances were identified as discretionary maximums, to be fine-tuned within their immediate contexts, and in relationship to various public advantages to be gained in rezoning negotiations – certainly not offered as entitlements.

An eventual modest city skyline was envisioned - a backdrop to Victoria's historic downtown - gradually rising from the south and the north, and descending to the east – in an undulating contour, reflective of Victoria's hilly setting - rather than an abrupt vertical thrust, such as now characterizes cities like Calgary and Toronto. A smaller secondary skyline area was identified for the Songhees hill-top, and a third low profile skyline south of the Harbour – all surrounding a low-scale harbour and historic core - creating the 'view basin' of an 'urban amphitheatre'.

General criteria for individual new buildings were established - to be distinctive and fitting for Victoria. Respected urban commentators such as Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl have long noted that pedestrian-friendly, retail-successful street-frontages tend to be in the range of three to five storeys, with shops and services set close to sidewalks. Many of today's urban designers make the case that combined low-rise (three to five stories) and mid-rise (five to ten stories) areas of cities are the liveliest and most sustainable – typically known for good 'propinquity' (the condition of amiable interpersonal activity) - certainly a condition not found in dense high-rise tenement areas like suburban Hong Kong, or the Bronx 'Projects' – and not known to be praised as a virtue of Burnaby's high-rise Metrotown area.

Allowances for floor areas for lower building levels were maximized, while limiting floor areas in higher levels, especially above 20 and then 30 meters (ten residential storeys), thus emphasizing lower and mid-rise building forms, and seeking to avoid large bulky high-rise blocks such as View Towers. This, (along with maintaining Victoria's long-standing 1/5 street set-back envelope above streetwalls), leads to architecturally elaborate terraced forms, which: reduce the visual impact of set-back taller buildings; counter wind downdraft and vortexes

along streets; and provide more sunlight and open sky views to sidewalks - all important factors for framing attractive, well-used streets, particularly in Victoria's moody winter climate. Clearances between buildings, including for moderately higher blocks, were intentionally snug, to help create an intimate, low and fine-scale new cityscape – a livable, modernized complement to Victoria's Old Town.

None of these general urban design criteria, tailored to benefit City character and its public for generations, were fashioned to constrain innovation in architectural design – architects are notably skilled, and to be applauded, for responding creatively within urban planning constraints.

I constructed an elaborate 3D digital study model of Downtown - confirming that these development forms, within constrained, modest height-limits, would readily house the intended ten thousand new residents, plus new commercial uses, within the core area – indeed with ample capacity for additional growth in further decades ahead. Dozens of detailed 3D studies demonstrated that an almost endless variety of building sizes and designs could be created to suit the diversity of lot sizes and shapes available throughout Victoria's core - while also contributing to the key objective of distinct character districts: Old Town, the Inner Harbour, Chinatown, Rock Bay, a Central Business District, and the east (Harrison Green) Residential District. 3D mock-ups of thirty storey towers were glaringly out-of-scale for Victoria.

So how would great increases in building height, such as currently proposed for these two Starline Development projects on Yates Street, improve on planning objectives developed with conscientious public consultation and confirmation over a period of about ten years? What answer is offered for long-known highrise living problems for family and assisted housing? Why introduce jarring conflicts to the urban identity and affordability of this City? What driver, other than high profitability, justifies the form of these extremely vertical towers?

These projects are indeed proposed for an area due increased occupancy – but could be adjusted readily to be welcome building forms - by simply removing the top third of proposed point-tower heights, and instead arraying additional mid-rise floor areas adjacent to more reticent tower blocks - creating lower, stepped building forms, with a mid-rise emphasis. All feasible on the proposed parking structure lay-outs – and certainly reasonable revisions to achieve sympathetic, civil building forms - which would complement Victoria as a unique place, rather than a counterfeit understudy to cities like Calgary and Vancouver.

Sincerely,

Chris Gower, Architect, Urban Design Planner

Your Worship Mayor Helps and Victoria City Council,

I write with concerns and opposition to the proposed heights and building forms for the following project and for its future companion project on Yates Street:

903, 911 & 1045 Yates, 910 View and 1205 Quadra:
Rezoning App. No. 00730 for 903, 911 & 1045 Yates, 910 View and 1205 Quadra
and Associated OCP Amendment, Development Permit with Variances App. No. 00150
for 1045 Yates (London Drugs) (Harris Green)

Please consider the details of my attached letter.
These projects could readily be revised to shorter, stepped building forms, suited to the
distinctive character of Victoria.

The currently proposed heights and building forms would prove contradictory to an amiable,
pedestrian scale Downtown Core Area.

Thank you,
Chris Gower
Architect, Urban Design Planner

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

As a downtown resident, it felt sad and concerned to see such a large, dense and tall development even being considered.

What does this decision serve?

Is it in alignment and setting precedence for the city you are championing to see/evolve?

It is already a loss and surprising that the beautiful, community oriented space of Harris Green will be taken away (Market on Yates, walk in clinic, cobbs etc.) - a perfect symmetry. Harris Green really makes for a nice reprieve in the downtown core, has beautiful trees, and builds a strong sense of community.

As mentioned, it is even more concerning that not only will we lose this space in our community, but that it could be replaced with something so drastically opposite to it.

When I think of Victoria, and the values around community, the environment, etc., I do not see how this fits with the core of who we are.

As a management consultant, I reviewed the City's strategic plan, and also saw a misalignment with this. https://www.victoria.ca/assets/Departments/Planning~Development/Community~Planning/OCP/Up~to~date~OCP~and~Design~Guidelines/OCP_Section3.pdf . Particularly, these values (page 3) and goals (page 4) which act as the core grounding of decision making.

Also for consideration to improve future processes: the part of the letter sent to residents in the area has this email in a very small portion of it, easily missed. Especially during covid, I wonder how much true consultation is being done. I am concerned about potential advantages taken during this time - whether intended or resulting.

I know you care - will you be a stand for us residents?

Sincerely,

Marina

Concerned resident of Harris Green

Hello,

I lived in harris green with my young family for 10 years before moving away to Saanich a few years ago. We loved walking to harris green village every few days to get almost everything we needed - London drugs and the market are key there. The walkway through to view street is also great! I still sometimes stop by harris green village when I am in town (where my wife and I work). It's not a great village with all the cars around and aging design, so I am excited for change.

It's encouraging to see development and many new rentals. To be honest, I do not think the tower heights matters. What matters more is that the bottom few floors work well for the community and the city, as well as density to a degree.

I like that there is an open community space. There isn't really anything there now. I see many people sitting on the benches around the street scape. But most of them look onto the existing parking lot.

I wish there was more detail on what the development and community spaces will really look like. It is important to have a "third place" for people to hang out and spend time away from home and work. This is even more important in dense urban areas where most homes are 500-800 sq ft - this is part of their living space too!

I like what the atrium building did by having a by-law open community space on the inside. This helps bring natural light in the building. I understand that sometimes small concerts can be held in that space. My toddler at the time loved walking around and climbing on the wooden statues and planters around the atrium building. It wasn't really a playground but a nice place to spend a bit of time on the way to the library or another place in town.

I truly hope that many of the businesses will be able to stay on in harris green village. I am not sure how the atrium building works but the businesses there like habit coffee and superbaba are excellent additions to the community. I hope there is a way for smaller local businesses, like bin4, jojos hair salon, etc. to stay viable in a new arrangement like harris green village. But it's not clear to me if there's a way that will be guaranteed.

thanks for the opportunity for feedback!

-Ryan

with all due respect:

Why have we in Victoria given out permits for a 20 or 21 story high rise? That is too high. The population growth does not warrant such high structures. And who can afford them among all the poor of the city? Who can afford to live and or work in such buildings? (Doctors are shutting down clinics so it won't be doctors.) And as to the idea of "affordable units" - most of the people needing housing are living in tents - so there won't be anything "affordable" for them!

We must rethink our priorities here.

We are not planning for the future.

Do not approve this permit for the Harris Green Development by Starlight - a company with no vested interest in this city, a developer with only profits in mind.

G. Kirkman

32 storeys is just crazy. Please say no.

Good Day to Mayor Helps and Councillors of Victoria

We were so disappointed to hear of the council's approval of the Harris Green proposal, especially the 32 storey height. To us this is well beyond a reasonable scale. I understand you will get some rental housing out of it but still this is too much. We were hoping for some consideration for what this will do to the city. Once you have approved such a massive development with these enormous heights other proposals will surely follow. Suddenly the city will have huge buildings well beyond human scale. We are so disappointed in this decision.

We are hoping that further study will give you the opportunity to rethink this decision.

all the best

Susan Phillips and Anne Gloger

304-1015 Rockland Ave

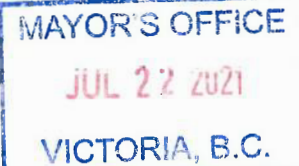
Victoria BC V8V 3H6

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Susan Phillips

July 18, 2021

TO: MAYOR AND ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS
RE: THE HARRIS GREEN SO-CALLED
DEVELOPMENT



Everyone who we have talked with cannot believe what you are doing to our city by approving the **32** stories that the development [REDACTED] from Ontario want to build in our heritage city.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO IGNORE EXISTING POLICY FOR BUILDINGS NOT TO EXCEED 20 FLOORS!!!! WHAT DID THE ONTARIO [REDACTED] PROMISE YOU, A PARK BENCH!!?

THIS IS TOTALLY WRONG AND YOUR ARROGANCE AS A SO-CALLED COUNCIL IS BEYOND BELIEF! YOU SHOULD BE SUED. THE PEOPLE OF VICTORIA HAVE NOT AND DO NOT ASKED FOR THESE [REDACTED] TOWERS TO DESTROY OUR CITY. JUST LOOK AT THE UGLINESS OF VANCOUVER.

BY APPROVING THIS YOU HAVE
SET AN HORRIBLE PRECEDENT!!

CC: STARLIGHT INVESTMENTS CEO AND BOARD

*You PEOPLE ARE TRULY
DETESTED!*

Harris Green project faces hurdles

ROXANNE EGAN-ELLIOTT
Times Colonist

One of the largest development projects Victoria has seen in years must boost affordable-housing units and meet several other conditions before it can move to a public hearing.

Toronto developer Starlight is proposing a transformation of one and a half city blocks bordered by Yates and View streets and Cook and Quadra streets.

The project would see existing buildings torn down in the 900 block of Yates Street, and at the corner of Yates Street and Cook, to construct a mixed-use development that includes more than 1,500 rental units in towers up to 32 storeys tall, along with commercial space, a daycare, office space and a public plaza. Two residential towers at Yates and Vancouver streets, between the two parcels, would remain.

The first phase of development would focus on 1045 Yates St., the site of the Harris Victoria vehicle dealership, and would include two residential towers of 20 and 21 storeys, with ground-floor commercial space, six townhouse units and a daycare.

The 900 block of Yates, which currently houses a commercial complex that includes London Drugs, Market on Yates grocery store, small shops, restaurants and a liquor store, would feature three towers of 28 to 32 storeys.

An existing building at 990 View St. would be redeveloped, resulting in the loss of 15 rental units. At least 23 new units would be secured as affordable rental housing.

Councillors voted 5-4 Thursday to move forward with the project if the developer meets several conditions, including increasing affordable units to at least 15 per cent (with at least 33 per cent during the first phase of development), increasing the



An artist's rendering of the proposal for 1045 Yates St.
STARLIGHT DEVELOPMENTS

number of two- and three-bedroom units, ensuring the public plaza is mostly "park-like green space," providing five per cent accessible units and securing at least 450 square metres for child-care space.

The project will need to return to councillors for a vote on aspects of the proposal that require amendments to the city's official community plan.

Coun. Marianne Alto said there's clearly discomfort about the height and density of the project. "There's no getting around it — it's huge. And I think that that is really anomalous and unusual for Victoria."

However, the project is the type of development the city will have to consider downtown as the city grows, she said.

In response to councillors' concerns about the size of the towers, staff said the development would likely be smaller if they were condos, but higher density is needed to make rental projects feasible.

Mayor Lisa Helps said housing supply is her biggest

concern and it's necessary to push the limits of density to meet housing needs. She called the project the most difficult land-use decision she has faced.

"I can't in good conscience turn back housing, particularly rental housing," she said, citing a city report that showed Victoria is between 4,500 and 6,300 units short of housing units to meet current needs.

Coun. Sharmarke Dubow, who voted against the project along with councillors Geoff Young, Charlayne Thornton-Joe and Ben Isitt, said while he supported the conditions, he could not agree to the project moving forward until he saw the changes.

Isitt questioned whether allowing up to 32 storeys when the maximum allowed by current guidelines is 20 could lead to a "slippery slope," rendering city policies essentially meaningless.

Josh Kaufman, vice-president of development and construction at Starlight, said the company will review the amendments to determine next steps.
regan-elliott@timescolonist.com

Dear Mayor Helps and Victoria City Councillors,

I write to register my opposition to, and great concern with, the heights and building forms proposed for the Starlight Development project in the Harris Green district. I find this proposal to be an illustration of the ongoing damage to the character and the wider civic amenity of Victoria—particularly because it demonstrates so graphically how those elements that have enabled the city to develop true neighbourhoods are being systematically destroyed by Council approvals of the last few years. Neighbourhoods cannot develop in tower blocks. There are reams of international evidence to show that tower blocks such as those proposed for this Harris Green development diminish the quality of life in urban environments, and kill neighbourhoods.

The approval of so many over-height buildings in the last few years by Victoria's Council has caused an upsetting degree of harm to this city. Much of it has not been well-considered development, and its approvals have often seemed irresponsible. The proliferation of tall, out-of-scale buildings is gradually and systematically taking away the city's sky, as well as its views of distant hills and mountains—irreplaceable attributes for which the city has been internationally renowned.

In my career I have in one way or another been involved with civic developments in Seville, Spain and in Edinburgh, Scotland—and I write as a long-time resident and business-person in the City of Victoria, as the founding CEO of Tourism Victoria, and as a former presenter of civic festivals in Victoria.

Respectfully,
Michael Elcock

Victoria, BC
Canada V9A 6Y5

It must go ahead to improve an area on decline. Downtown needs its people to live and work there instead of Langford.

Detractors are misunderstanding what progress is now. Their view is to keep areas in a stagnating stage for many years. Starlight is private investment and this city NEEDS that badly to recover. Thanks

Gregor Campbell Victoria BC

Hello Mayor Helps and members of council ~

I have concerns and interests I'd like to share with you about the Harris Green project.

I am not a resident in Harris Green; I live in North Park. But as a citizen of the city for three years now, I have become concerned about some of the development projects happening in this beautiful city I'm so proud to call home now.

When I first learned about this proposed project, the first thing that occurred to me was the loss of amenities that serve an increasing and densely populated community. London Drugs, Market on Yates grocery store, small shops, restaurants and more are essential amenities for residents.

Now I am very concerned about the height and density of the project. Increasing the height of towers from the current guideline of 20 storeys to 32 – 12 more stories! – can not be supported. Yes, we need more housing but a rush to address that need through such measures cannot be justified.

Victoria's history is nicely reflected in the changes of architecture style we see in homes and commercial properties ... evidence on display for years ... how does this development serve to honour our traditions and respect for our city's sensibilities? Where is the vision of how we want to present ourselves to future generations realized in this proposal?

I remain very cautious about the always 'promise' for market value housing ... in rentals and condos? \$2000/month for new rental units will not meet the accessible interests of many of our citizens ... and a rate sure to increase when the project is ready for occupancy. To achieve that goal I think we need more alternate forms of housing including lower-rise that could be nicely integrated into existing residential neighbourhoods.

The existing building at 990 View Street rebuilding would result in the loss of 15 rental units; with 'at least' 23 new rental units, for a possible increase of eight (8!) to be 'secured' as affordable housing. This does not begin to address the said rationale for increasing tower height to provide needed housing, especially rental housing.

I am also concerned about the request that the developer secure five percent (5%) accessibility units. How does this address council's commitment to shift from equality to equity of services and programs for residents with mobility and other health issues.

Note that council has requested other changes to meet several conditions, including increasing affordable units to 'at least' 15 percent (15%). I am concerned with how often council's expectations are captured as 'at least'.

Trusting my concerns merit your consideration ...

Gail

Dear Mayor and Council,

I hope you can reach out to Harris Green Village developer with this proposal.

<https://nestron.house/portfolio/legend-two-x/>

First, please take the time to look at this link above. This is a studio sized well finished unit with 2 bedrooms, that is truly affordable.

The proposal is to create cost effective slim buildings that pack more of these units for rental and a mix of rent to own units.

How can this be achieved?

The shell exterior can be designed to match for placing these finished affordable Nestron Concept homes. The interior can be just unfinished looking concrete or epoxy flooring, where people walk into their units. Of course the money maker will be the top floors 360 view living penthouses. In this manner, the company will provide to all people.

I hope this idea will decrease cost of building as the units come finished but just need to be placed on each level accordingly and the exterior shell of the building can be designed to match the units placement on each level. This will reduce labour cost, finishing costs and most importantly reduce the time frame. Time = Money for the developer.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Jasveer Singh Bal

Dear Council,

WHEN will this public hearing on Harris Green be?

We, who have lived in Victoria for many years, are heart sick to see our beloved Victoria being destroyed. We think that developers have the Council in their pockets or pay you off in some way. I know that is harsh, but so is tearing down Harris Green which is the central shopping area for many of us.

We do not want Victoria to turn into Vancouver. Do you want Victoria to become just another uninviting city like Vancouver and Toronto? Victoria still has charm, but with the continual construction of downtown Victoria, like Harris Green, soon Victoria will look just like Vancouver.

If we wanted to live in Vancouver we would move there. Please re-think what you are doing to beautiful Victoria and our home, We actually shop at Harris Green! It is part of our lives. We are Not Tourists. We live here. I repeat we do not want to be tourists in our own city. We want Victoria to remain our **HOME**.

Thank You,
Earleen Roumagoux

Dear Mayor and council and Mr. Sutherland:

I recently received a development notice requesting variances, for towers up to 32 storeys. I will try to keep my response brief, but I feel very strongly about the subject of variances and high-rises in Victoria.

- people love Victoria because of (what used to be) the small/human scale of downtown (e.g. Old Town)
- European cities, which attract tourists, do not have high-rises, nor do lovely downtowns like Portland
- there is a balance between density and quality of life (human scale); a 10-storey building, let alone 32-storey, is not appealing to humans; we can create all the density we need by building 3-4 storey buildings all over main arteries of Victoria
- tall buildings remove light (create unappealing shadows) and change the climate downtown
- high-rises increase the cost of living, and DECREASE AFFORDABILITY, by increasing the price of land

I own a business downtown and live in Fairfield. I used to love living in Victoria and working downtown. PLEASE stop building high-rises; they destroy what a lot of Victorians and tourists love about Victoria.

Thank you for your time,
Heidi Webster