

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to express concern about the proposed development located at 822 Catherine Street in Vic West (DPV00173). If council approves this application, it will be setting a sad precedent.

Let me begin by acknowledging that the city – the entire region – is in the midst of a severe housing crisis and that there is a need to add new stock, affordable, and accessible rental stock to the market. Should this building proposal proceed nine families who have called Vic West home, some for decades, will face eviction into a relentless and grinding rental housing market in order to build new ‘at market’ rental units that will far exceed the ability of most low to medium income renters to afford which utterly counters city council’s commitment to serving the so-called ‘missing middle’. If I am to understand correctly, while a right of first refusal to return to the address once the new building is complete has been extended to current tenants. The original commitment to provide these tenants with options to rent at 20% under market value (a sure sign of the high rents community members ought to expect from this development) has quietly vanished.

Unfortunately, the engagement process for this development has been hampered by what I would construe as a bad faith refusal of the developer to adequately engage with the local CALUC. The initial CALUC informational meeting was commanded by the developer over zoom in such a way as the CALUC was unable to adequately record community feedback by taking advantage of the Zoom platform to act as sole host of the meeting, to hide the participant list, to hide the questions in the chat so that participants could not know or understand what their fellow community members were asking, refusing to take ‘spoken’ questions or comments from the floor, and to only respond to those questions to which the developer chose to respond, ignoring the rest without providing rationales on which these decisions were based. The CALUC approached the developer inviting them to attend a CALUC-hosted community meeting. The developer refused. The CALUC felt it would be underhanded to host a meeting on a development without the developer present to respond to questions.

Concerns have included lack of affordability, the eviction of long-term tenants, the failure of the development to respect the neighbourhood plan, and the refusal of the developer to engage with the community in good faith.

This city needs good housing solutions and needs positive place-making and community building development. This particular development proposal does not provide that solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours respectfully,

Justine Semmens

(President, VWCA)

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Traditional and unceded territories of the Lekwungen speaking people of the Songhees, Esquimalt,
and W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations

[REDACTED]

From: Dan DuFeu [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 7:07 PM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: RE: Development Permit with Variances Application 00173 - 822 Catherine St

In short, I do not approve of this rezoning with the proposed density and height. As it stands now, we are going through a densification in the area, and I generally support this, however I feel that this project oversteps what is reasonable for the community.

I look to recent developments at Wilson Commons and a proposed development at 315 Edward. These are 2.5-3 story developments which have an adequate parking ratio and have 'manageably' increased density to the neighbourhood. I enjoy how these developments are working hard to fit into the look and feel of the community, adding to the local charm.

This proposed building appears to be a high density steel box building designed to maximize profit-per-square-foot for the developer and does not seem to consider the surrounding properties at all.

One last note: I am cautiously welcoming the supportive housing building that is under construction on Catherine St, but in no way do I feel that this justifies council granting permission to build another high-density box building built just across the street.

Dan DuFeu
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