



## James Bay Neighbourhood Association

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234 Menzies St  
Victoria, B.C.  
V8V 2G7

[www.jbna.org](http://www.jbna.org)

To: Deb Day, Director Planning  
Fr: Marg Gardiner, President, JBNA  
Cc: Janice Schmidt, JBNA Board

November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014

**Re: PLUC: Proposed Development 301-303 St Lawrence.**

The November 6<sup>th</sup> PLUC agenda package identifies the proposed development of a 4-plex at 301-303 St Lawrence.

The proposal came through JBNA DRC/CALUC on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

In the past week we have received communications from near-by residents.

**Please ensure that the information provided to PLUC for the November 6<sup>th</sup> meeting includes the following communications**

*(NOTE: the first three items have been provided to you/City earlier in the year and last week):*

January 13

JBNA letter re January 8<sup>th</sup> CALUC meeting

August 18

JBNA letter re revised proposal

*(Note: question asked by JBNA **NOT** responded to)*

October 31

Michael Brinton (E-mail and 2 e-mails with JBNA comment)

*Provided to you on October 31*

October 31

Kelsei Stiles

November 1

Michael and Elaine Brinton

November 1

Barbara McLintock e-mail

November 2

Dani Eisler – letter via e-mail

Marg Gardiner, President, JBNA

# Strata Council 118 Michigan St

118 Michigan St, Victoria BC, V8V1R1

October 31, 2014

City of Victoria Mayor and Councilors  
City of Victoria Land Use Development Departments

Dear Sir or Madame,

We (the Strata Council of 118 Michigan St) are writing to you to voice our opinions and concerns on the proposed development at 301/303 St Lawrence St – our immediate neighbour.

Having met with a member of the development team (Mark Imhoff) we understand that two design proposals have been (or will be) submitted for 301/303 St Lawrence St. (see attached PDF):

1. A 'Modern' four-plex design
2. A 'Four-Sisters' four-plex design (designed to reflect the Four Sisters heritage homes across the street)

**Members of our Strata have expressed serious concerns over the aspects of the 'Four-Sisters' proposal.**

In the 'Modern' proposal the design/slope of the roofline reflects our concerns over the amount of light that will be lost for the neighbours residing the townhouses on the west side of 118 Michigan. The 'Four-sisters' proposal does not make this concession – instead it will block out more significant amounts of light as the roofline is many feet higher.

In the 'Modern' proposal the primary outdoor living space is in the front of the homes – away from any and all neighbours. While there are windows in the rear of the 'Modern' proposal it appears to be designed with the immediate neighbours in mind – trying to reduce the impact on our living spaces.


The 'Four-Sisters' proposal has balconies at the rear of the property. These balconies directly overlook the residents of 118 Michigan. In fact for some 118 Michigan residents these **balconies look directly into both their master bedrooms AND living rooms**. I think any sensible person would agree this almost completely erodes the private enjoyment of these residents' homes. The balcony encroachment and loss of privacy will not only will destroy the private oasis of our living space it has also raised serious concerns about resale values and potential loss of property value.

We ask that you take our concerns into consideration when reviewing the 301/303 St Lawrence proposals. Based on the existing proposals the residents of 118 Michigan would strong recommend the approved four-plex design takes our privacy and re-sale values into account and doesn't restrict our ability to enjoy our homes.

Sincerely,

*Kelsi Stiles*

Kelsi Stiles



From: **Michael Brinton**

Date: Sat, Nov 1, 2014 at 11:16 PM

Subject: 301 / 303 St. Lawrence Street Fourplex Rezoning / Design Change - IMPORTANT INFO...

To: [councillors@victoria.ca](mailto:councillors@victoria.ca)

Greetings Victoria Councillors,

We are owners of the James Bay property, Unit #1, 118 Michigan Street and our strata unit faces directly to 301 / 303 St. Lawrence Street. Currently it has an old duplex which the Imhoff Group is proposing for redevelopment to a new fourplex.

Mr. Imhoff kindly spent time with us months ago, shortly after acquiring the property, providing us blueprints of the proposed fourplex. Although the lot is currently zoned duplex he persuaded us that we were better off accepting his fourplex plan for the following reason: If he built another duplex he would be unopposed in building a high structure close to our property line that would be unpleasant for us to live next to.

Better we accept his fourplex proposal for a design that featured: **1.** Location spaced farther away from our property line. **2.** A low roof line that would still allow at least minimal light over the unit, less wall effect. **3.** No balconies or large windows facing our lot so our privacy would not be radically impaired.

This design appealed to us and we viewed it as not significantly lessening our property values and could be acceptable to live next to. PLEASE NOTE: We are NOT opposed to redevelopment of the lot, we intended to be supportive of a mutually acceptable proposal. We consider our response to be very accommodating, considering we are being asked to support rezoning for a fourplex over a duplex. Even WITH accepting this proposal we knew we will be accepting less light, blocked viewpoints and much larger structure shadowing us. (Including our Unit #1 upper bedroom window losing it's partial ocean view.)

The initial design considerations to minimize structure height and the relative privacy of no balconies facing us and ONLY these aspects of the presentation encouraged us to *conditionally* give Mr. Imhoff our endorsement for his needed zoning change / impending construction.

*PLEASE NOTE:* This initial design was endorsed by: 1. The Developer (obviously), 2. Our Strata (the ONLY adjacent residents to the lot), 3. The James Bay Neighbourhoos Assoc. All good, right?

**Wow!** Were we shocked to discover that somehow via the City of Victoria Planning administrators the above proposed / acceptable plan was rejected in favour of a fourplex structure that we are all VERY MUCH OPPOSED TO. (How can this HAPPEN?)

Our objections: Although it is understood that the location of the new design still provides some space between our structures, that is the *only* acceptable similarity -

1. The much higher roof line will significantly limit light coming in our west windows. There is a concern for personal safety along our exterior west property line sidewalk access to four strata units in darker months. It will also cause our current plants / gardening to be threatened by insufficient light.
2. The new design has balconies switched from the front (facing St. Lawrence Street) to the back - directly facing us. With large patio door / window views directly into the living rooms / dining rooms / bedrooms of our units. Barbecue activities / common balcony noise will adversely affect us.

We are unified at 118 Michigan Strata (that has existed here since 1979) in requesting that the INITIAL proposal or a design VERY close to it be revisited for approval. Lower the roofline and no balconies on the east side please! This part of James Bay (like all of James Bay actually) is NOT a continuous traditional 100+ yr old neighbourhood architecturally. It is a mixture of traditional AND contemporary designs. There is NO compelling reason to require THIS project to comply with 100 year old design features at the expense of enjoyment and diminished property value of us, the most affected adjacent neighbours. The initial contemporary design proposal is complimentary to the mixed housing styles in the neighbourhood. All parties appear to agree except City Planners?? This surely must be unprecedented!

City Councillors, PLEASE, at this coming Thursday Council Planning Meeting - SUPPORT US IN JAMES BAY in rejecting the revised design for 301 / 303 St. Lawrence St. Thank you very much!

Michael and Elaine Brinton  
Unit #1, 118 Michigan Street, Victoria V8V 1R1



7 – 118 Michigan Street  
Victoria, BC V8V 1R1

November 1, 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I write to comment on the proposed redevelopment of 301/303 St. Lawrence Street in James Bay, which I understand is scheduled to be discussed at a Planning Committee meeting on Nov. 6. As a resident of the adjacent townhouse complex at 118 Michigan Street, I and my fellow-residents are by far the nearest residential neighbours of the planned redevelopment.

Proponent Mark Imhoff has done a good job of keeping us informed of his plans, and when he first approached us with his ideas for the new development, I (and I think the majority of residents of the complex) was prepared to be supportive of this rezoning. Although there was some negative impact, particularly from blockage of some natural light, it was recognized that this site is currently under-utilized, especially in light of the City's innovative redevelopment of Fisherman's Wharf Park directly across the street. The plans appeared to be sensitive to our concerns as neighbours and to have been designed to mitigate the negative impact as much as possible. They were worth supporting.

In the last few weeks, however, we have been presented with plans so altered that they amount to a virtually total redesign of the project. We understand this redesign was undertaken at the request of the city who are hoping that the frontage on St. Lawrence Street would look more like the "Seven Sisters" further south on St. Lawrence.

Unfortunately the changes completely erase all the efforts previously made to mitigate negative impacts on us, the nearest neighbours. The rooflines have been further raised with the result of blocking out significantly more of the light for those who reside on the west side of our complex. Even more troubling, the balconies have been moved from the St. Lawrence frontage to the rear aspects of the townhouses, meaning they will directly overlook the main living areas (living room and master bedroom) of units in our complex. The result, if this is allowed to proceed, would be the virtual elimination of normal privacy for the residents of those units. (As an aside, I also cannot imagine that the residents of the new units would prefer to view their neighbours' living spaces from their balconies, rather than the greenspace of the park across the street.)

In closing, I strongly urge you to allow the proponent to return to the original design proposed for this development, with perhaps some MINOR modifications if necessary. If the re-design is the one that is allowed to go ahead, I will have no choice but to withdraw my support for this rezoning. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me by email at: [REDACTED]

Yours very truly,  
Barbara McLintock

**November 2, 2014**

**Dani Eisler**

3 – 118 Michigan Street  
Victoria, BC V8V 1R1



**City of Victoria Mayor and Councilors  
City of Victoria Land Use Development Departments**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed new development at 301/303 St. Lawrence Street. I understand this is an item on the agenda for the upcoming Planning Committee Meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

My townhouse is one of the four nearest residences of the planned redevelopment, immediately to the east. My front door, living room window, and bedroom window overlook the site. Obviously I have a great interest in this issue.

Originally, Mark Imhoff presented plans to our strata members, plans that addressed some of the negative impact that a new, higher structure would have on us. The roofline took into account and minimized the blockage of natural light. The window positions on the back of the building, the side immediately facing our living spaces, allowed for as much privacy as possible. The position of the new building was well back from the property line, another factor in limiting loss of light and loss of privacy.

Recently, it's come to my attention that the plans have been changed radically, apparently at the request of the City, in order to homogenize the streetscape by having 301/303 St. Lawrence resemble the "4 Sisters" on the opposite corner of St. Lawrence and Michigan Streets.

James Bay is home to a wonderful diversity in design. The buildings within even a block of 301/303 St. Lawrence are varied, but compatible. The traditional "4 Sisters", the modern Church of Truth, the majestic Shoal Point, and The Reef with its contemporary flourishes all contribute character to the neighbourhood. The initial design for the redevelopment of the property was attractive and suitable for its location. It was also respectful of our existing homes to the immediate east, with the lower roofline maximizing light, and the outdoor space in front providing separation between living spaces.

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I do not support the new design. The much higher roof will block much of the incoming light from my home and front garden. Not only will this mean the interior of my home will be darker and colder – in almost constant shadow – but it also raises the issue of personal safety along the sidewalk on the west side of our strata – access to four of our strata units. Three of those four units are owned and occupied by single female seniors. I am one of them.

In addition to the much higher roofline, the new plan moves the primary outdoor living space for the two middle units to the back of the property. The larger windows and the balconies will have clear sightlines into my front door, my living room and my bedroom. With gas fittings included on the balconies, obviously (and understandably) bbq's will be in use. Cooking odors and noise from common activity will be inescapable. These larger windows and encroaching balconies mean an extreme loss of privacy, and also restrict my enjoyment of my own property.

Please note: I am not opposed to the redevelopment of the property. But it must be an acceptable design that enhances the neighbourhood, and does not unduly infringe on my privacy, or my property value. I felt the initial design, originally presented to our strata members and to the James Bay Neighbourhood Association meeting in January, was worthy of support.

I do not understand why the initial design was rejected, and why we, as neighbours, were not notified or involved in the process. As it stands, I cannot support the redevelopment as radically altered from the initial plan.

I urge you to return to the design originally presented to the community and us by Mark Imhoff, perhaps with minor modifications, if necessary. It would allow for the continued enjoyment of my property, the ensuring of my safety and privacy, the protection of my home's resale value, and it would be a great addition to the community.

Sincerely

Dani Eisler