

Subject: Cook and Oliphant development proposal (Page 1 of 2)

It is my understanding that the City Planning Department has to recommend this project for Public Hearing as is because the project complies with the current OCP allowing up to six stories and density uplift to 2.5. There are no other “policies” for staff to justify doing otherwise.

On February 11, 2015 in the Application Review Summary Planning Staff stated that

“The building will be a major landmark for Cook Street Village”

In that same report of February 11, there were long list of Conditions to be met prior to the Planning and Land Use Committee, but only a few smaller items were addressed. I’m not aware of any concerns brought forth at either CALUC meeting being addressed. WHY IS THAT?

Most documents pertaining to the “village,” including the OCP, talk about new developments matching the FIT, CHARACTER, SCALE, of the village. Would you be happy to duplicate this development throughout the village? Do the design, use of materials and height, blend in and complement the village?

If there is a list of reasonable changes to any development proposal needed to rectify concerns raised, then doing so is the correct course of action. And if there are numerous concerns, requiring significant, drastic and complex changes to address a wide spectrum of issues, then maybe the entire project needs rethinking.

Comments made by speakers at the December 7th CALUC Meeting about this project

Supporters of this project at the December 7th CALUC gave almost identical reasons for their support: affordable housing for young people, increased density and aging in place. The only exception was one person who supported the project solely for the commercial element.

Others who spoke at that meeting or who have submitted letters have raised the following concerns:

Is this proposal the only way to achieve density? Family housing can increase density, reduce construction cost, parking requirements and provided a much needed service to a community.

Smart Growth BC and CMHC define housing as affordable when a household can spend less than 30% of their income on accommodation. Is this project really providing Affordable Housing?

Are there any environmental standards for this building such as LEED standards, green features, a green roof, rainwater management and wastewater retention? Looking to the future has to mean more than density, global warming is not just an expression.

The project has 93% site coverage and we believe the other 7% are concrete planters on top of concrete. The OCP calls for the development of urban centres alongside healthy and productive green infrastructure.

As with 240 Cook Street, the third and subsequent floors need to be terraced back on Cook and Oliphant to preserve the skyline, allow for natural sunlight in the village and reducing massing.

At 165 feet long, a mid-block walkway is needed to reducing significant massing on Cook.

This project is 23 feet higher than the neighbouring apartment building at 1050 Park Ave, not to mention the houses on Oliphant

The project needs double-wide sidewalks and no physical barriers to protect public space and the rights of citizens/scooters, under the transportation policy to have an unobstructed corridor.

The lack of any setbacks on Cook and Oliphant impinges on public space for outdoors seating that is being promoted in the new Sidewalk Café policy and would offer a social return to the village

Commercial space past Oliphant is contrary to the OCP and Cook Street Village Guidelines. The removal of commercial space could be a step towards addressing some of the other issues.

The City of Victoria's definition for transitions says that designs for new buildings should **consider scale, orientation, setbacks, mass and building**.

There are numerous issues with the parking in every aspect - numbers, location, calculations. Insufficient parking will create overflow onto adjacent side streets, which are mostly restricted to residential parking and with Biketoria threatening to remove parking in the Village, there is no room for reducing parking requirements.

There is no physical way a large straight or semi- delivery truck can turn into or fit in the loading zoning for this project. The neighbouring loading area across the street is three times the size, still all such trucks making deliveries park on Oliphant, making it a blind turn and blocking the flow of traffic.

Building access and design are inadequate for seniors. One elevator for both residential and commercial users, located in the commercial parking area is a personal safety issue for residents

No provisions for electrical charging stations, for electric vehicles and scooters, as called for in the OCP.

Is the Density Land Lift Analysis return in proportion to what is being requested and how much is being absorbed within the project itself? What is the return to the community and at what cost?

This proposal is asking for a 100% increase in what was permitted in the previous OCP. Height and density are at the maximum and everything else appears to be at the minimum. It is a bit of a shocking revelation.

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