

Janet Hawkins

From: webforms@victoria.ca
Sent: Wednesday, Sep 9, 2015 11:34 AM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: Council Meetings

From: Paul Seal

Email [REDACTED]

Reference :

Daytime Phone [REDACTED]

September 9, 2015

I'm writing today to ask council to decline the Development Variance Permit Application #000385 for 759 Yates St.

I toured the building this summer and have seen over a half-dozen completed suites. I've studied the floor plans and the proposed bicycle parking plan. And I've had a brief in-person discussion, and a lengthy telephone conversation with the developer about the project, the latter just two weeks ago.

I'm impressed with the suites, and I agree with most of the developer's vision for the project. And I agree with the parking variance to allow for no automobile parking requirement. But in return for the parking variance requested, I do not believe bicycle parking has been adequately addressed.

I believe that 72 or 73 in-building bike parking spaces is not sufficient for a 97-unit building that has no car parking, and I believe the proposed 24 outdoor bike parking spaces are an invitation for bike theft for any bikes left outside overnight. For 14 years (1996 to 2010) I lived in a downtown building at Blanshard and North Park with 63 suites (a near-equal split of studio, 1br, 1+den and 2br) and 36 car parking stalls. We had over 60 bikes in our bike room, and this is a building with at least 36 car owners.

Consider for comparisons: The Juliette building (95 suites) at Johnson and Douglas, that has a total of 6 unsecure outdoor bike parking stalls.

Hudson Mews (rentals, 120 suites) and The Hudson (condos, 150 suites) combined have a total of 36 bike parking stalls outdoors around their perimeters and in the laneway (7x 4-bike racks, and 4x 2-bike racks), that they share with the commercial clients of the Market, bank and coffee shop.

I draw the above comparisons to point out that the 24 stalls offered outside the Dominion Rocket will be used by tenants there, and not just daytime "bike visitors" to the building and commercial area. And why wouldn't you use the convenient racks, rather than taking your bike up and down to your 2nd or 3rd floor unit, that's well under 350 sq. ft., or to your 3rd floor storage area? And in the daytime, as you come and go, outdoor racks are a great amenity, and probably safe if you use a quality bike lock. But the first time you "short cut" and consider leaving the bike out overnight, no matter how securely it's locked, it's at serious risk.

I keep an office at 733 Johnson Street (through Millie's Lane), and walk daily to work - 7 days per week - through the Dominion parking lot and across Yates, most days before 7am, some days as early as 4 or 5am. I can assure you, the 700-block Yates St. is not a safe place for bikes overnight. A VicPD news release from this July states "From January to June 2015, we received 335 reports of stolen bikes and have, so far, returned 120 of them to their rightful owners. We've also found 180 bikes that were not reported missing to us." For comparison, ICBC last reported that for all of Vancouver Island, they only had 400 car thefts in 2013.

Now I'm not suggesting that the developer is promoting these outdoor bike stalls for overnight use. He has made no indication of that. But I do suggest the unintended consequence of installing 24 of them - in front of a building with 97 suites, no resident or guest automobile parking, relatively small elevators (try taking your bike in an elevator) and admittedly the smallest suite sizes in all of Greater Victoria - will by design encourage their overnight use. And I'm afraid the first or second time a tenant or guest leaves a bike out overnight, it'll be gone in the morning.

I stated earlier I'm not opposed to the project, I support it. Indeed, the building has an occupancy permit now and people are already living in the building now, suite leases have been signed, the project is nearly complete. And so I also want to provide alternatives should you decline the variance application, as I suggest.

By my understanding the developer has at least two options. 1.

Designate more in-building space for bike parking, by eliminating some common area interior features or deleting a suite or two from the rental pool and converting them to bike parking. 2. Use a portion of the parking lot that he owns adjacent to the building (the current Foo and liquor store parking lot) for extra-secure private resident/guest-only bike parking.

Extra secure locking systems can be found here in Victoria at the City's covered compound behind the Save on Foods Memorial Centre.

Sincerely,

Paul Seal
57 Cambridge St.
Victoria

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