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27 January 2025

Re: 1551 & 1545 Bay Street, Letter to Mayor and Council

Project Summary

The proposed development is for a five-storey rental apartment building with 39 units. The proposed FSR is 2.5. All units are designed to BCBC 2024 Adaptable Dwelling Unit requirements. The building design is targeting Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification. The project includes 25% 2-bedroom units and 5% 3-bedroom units, meeting the City of Victoria's Family Housing Policy. Units are designed to address the City of Victoria's Advisory Design Guidelines for Family-Friendly Buildings + Spaces. Dedicated bike and garbage rooms are located within the building, and accessible and van accessible parking stalls are located on site. Common outdoor amenity space includes a rear landscape area and rooftop patio. The site is a 9-minute walk to Royal Jubilee Hospital and will provide much needed housing opportunities for health care workers and the City at large.

Government Policies:

The Land Use Designation of the Site is Housing Opportunity, envisioning up to 6-storey residential multi-family buildings with FSR up to 2.5. The proposed form of development conforms to the OCP and Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan, which supports additional housing and density in this area.

Neighbourhood and Impact:

Per the OCP, Bay Street is intended to be strengthened as a multi-modal mobility corridor with diverse housing choices, small urban villages, and public realm improvements. The sites access to transportation networks, schools, employment opportunities, green space, and Urban Villages make it suitable for the proposed density. Currently, the site is boarded by single-family homes. There are several midrise buildings near the site. As Bay Street develops in line with the OCP, it is expected that the number of multi-family and mixed-use mid-rise buildings will increase.

Project Benefits:

The project will add to Victoria's housing targets, helping to alleviate housing shortages, and provide a range of housing opportunities, including 1, 2 and 3-bedroom units. The proposed development will include upgrades to Bay Street and Victor Street frontages, and a 3.36 road dedication on Bay Street.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

The site is adjacent to major transit, bike, and walking routes. It is within walking and biking distance to neighbourhood parks, open space, employment centers and Urban Villages. The project will provide 49 long-term bike parking stalls, 50% of which will have access to 110V wall outlet, including 7 cargo bike stalls. The proposal includes one accessible and one van accessible parking stall on site with EV charging stations. A Parking Study and Traffic Impact Assessment has been completed by Watt Engineering. The Studies support the reduction in on-site parking spaces form Schedule C, indicate that there will be no impact on local traffic associate with the project. The project will include the following TDM measures:

- Additional long-term bicycle parking
- Non-standard bicycle parking Bicycle end-of-trip facilities
- Transportation welcome package

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- Provision of a Modo carsharing vehicle and memberships for each unit
- BC Transit Umo EcoPASS program participation

There is adequate public infrastructure available to meet the proposal, including sewer, power, and water. The project will include frontage improvements on Bay Street and Victor Street, including a 3.36m road dedication on Bay Street to meet City Standards. A site servicing plan and Sanitary Impact Assessment prepared by Calid Engineering will be provided as part of the rezoning, Development Variance Permit Application.

Design and development permit guidelines

The proposal is within DPA 16: General Form and Character and subject to the Multi-Unit Residential Guidelines. The design guidelines have been applied to generate a place sensitive design and build upon and improve the neighbourhood context.

Details and response to applicable Multi-Unit Residential Guidelines include, but are not limited to, the below.

- Guideline 1.1(c): Design buildings to sensitively transition in scale and provide sun access to adjacent open spaces.

  Response:
  1. Transition to neighbouring lots:
     Due to restraints related to BC hydro overhead clearance and site depth, it is not possible to reduce the upper floor unit depths and subsequently, step backs on upper floors are not possible. Units depths are as minimal as possible on all floors to maximize building setbacks. Transition to neighbouring lots is addressed via façade articulation and a 3” recess in façade alignment.
  2. Sun/shadows:
     There is no impact to the south, minimum impact to north and east, due to corner conditions, and limited impact to the west (morning only).
  3. Privacy:
     The building is oriented to reduce privacy impacts to residential neighbours on the side yards. Privacy impacts to the neighbour on the south yard is mitigated with perforated balconies and landscape screening.

- Guideline 1.1(f): Punctuate highly visible sites, corner sites or buildings at terminated street corridors by considering distinctive massing, building articulation, roof features or architectural treatments

  Response: Cladding articulation with 3” recess, window fenestrations, rooftop trees, and ground-oriented patios punctuate the corner.

- Guidelines 1.1(h): On corner sites, develop both street facing facades as front elevations, and Guidelines 2.1(a) Buildings and associated outdoor spaces should create “eyes on the street” and public spaces by orienting doorways, windows, patios and balconies to overlook sidewalks, walkways, parks and other open spaces.

  Response: Stair and elevator cores are inset, allowing units and windows to be located on both street fronting facades, providing animation to both facades and eyes on the street on both frontages.

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- Guidline 2.1(g): Buildings on corner sites should be designed to contribute to both facing streetscapes. Strategies to achieve this include but are not limited to a ground floor setback corner, a primary building entrance oriented to the corner, or features such as entries, windows, balconies, and storefronts (in commercial or mixed-use buildings) that address both fronting streets.

  Response: The stair core has been shifted in, to allow a dwelling unit to be located on the corner with a wraparound patio. Cladding break/articulation, lighting and canopies emphasizes the corner and ground plane.

- Guideline 2.3(a): Elevate patios or stoops from the public sidewalk to create a semiprivate transition zone, balanced with provision of accessible entries. Porches, steps, alcoves, raised terraces, forecourts, landscaping or other design features are encouraged to make transitions from the public realm of the street and sidewalk to the private realm of residences.

  Response: All ground-oriented units provide accessible access to patios, including a flush transition from the sidewalk at Bay Street. Generously sized planning beds are provided between Bay Street facing patios.

- Guidelines 2.4(b): Individual canopies or awnings of sufficient depth (are) be provided at building (and unit) entrances and entries to bicycle parking areas to protect pedestrians from inclement weather.

- Guidelines 2.5: Multi-unit residential developments are encouraged to be oriented to allow exposure to natural light.

  Response: High ceilings and ample glazing are provided for each unit providing a lofty bright feel for dwelling units.

- Guideline 3.0 – Composition

  Response: Cladding breaks mitigate perceived building massing and break up massing of building, by distinguishing upper floors and the building corner. Box rib metal panel, along with faceted panels provide texture and rhythm to the facades. Projecting canopies and awnings contribute to human scale design.

Safety and Security

CPTED is addressed by avoiding blank, windowless walls, activity generators, clear site-lines, and lighting.

Climate-forward Building Features

GREEN INDICATORS	
CATEGORY	**GREEN ITEMS**
Rating System	BC Energy Step Code 3
Site Selection and Design	• Thermally efficient building form and orientation • High performance windows • Appropriately sized windows for passive heating • Passive ventilation for summer months • Exterior roof and wall insulation

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	• Low window to wall ratio
Innovation and design	Solar Panel Ready, including: • Conduit to roof • Additional electrical panel size and space
Transportation	• Parking variance will reduce Green House gas emissions • Dedicated bike parking room with repair area • Walkable and biking distance to employment centers and amenities • 50% bikes provided with access to 110v outlet • EV charging stations
Energy Efficiency	• Zero carbon heating and cooling electric Heat Pumps for each unit • Carbon-free appliances
Water	Water conservation initiatives, including: • Faucets with flow rate of 8L/min or less • Showerheads with flow rate of 8L/min of less • Dual flush toilets with ultra-low flow (4.5L per flush or less)
Site Permeability	Permeable pavers are proposed, increasing site permeability and to reducing heat sink.
Landscaping and Urban Forest	• Net increase in number of trees on site • Only native and adapted vegetation • Drought tolerant vegetation