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

Project Summary

The proposed development is for a six-storey rental apartment building with 39 units. The proposed FSR is 2.54. All units are designed for 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, with 20% surplus, accessible and van accessible parking stalls are located on site, and a car share vehicle with EV charger will be provided on Victor Street. 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:

Under the forthcoming zoning and OCP the site is zoned General Residential District – 1 (GRD-1) and in a Priority Growth Area, allowing up to 6-storey with 2.6:1 FSR for rental apartment buildings. 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 full frontage replacement of curb, gutter, sidewalk, street lighting, drainage, asphalt, and boulevard to current City of Victoria standards, as well as 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 50 long-term bike parking stalls, 50% of which will have access to 110V wall outlet, including 4 cargo bike stalls. The proposal includes one accessible and one van accessible parking stall on site, and a dual-head EV charging station will be provided on Victor St for a car share vehicle, as coordinated with Transportation. 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:

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- Additional long-term bicycle parking
- Non-standard bicycle parking Bicycle end-of-trip facilities
- Transportation welcome package
- Provision of a Modo car sharing vehicle ($55,000 contribution to purchase & operation) 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 Changes Made in Response to the Application Review Comments

- Setbacks – An L-shaped design is proposed as suggested in TRG to increase rear yard setback for majority of the building and increase open site space and the usability of the rear yard landscape area.
    - Rear (south) yard setback increased by 1.72m for majority of south elevation. Setback at south-west corner increased from 5.24m to 6.96m.
    - Minimum rear (south) yard balcony setback increased from 2.35m to 4.4m. Remainder of rear yard balconies have larger setback due to skewed property line.
- Open Site Space
    - The open site space has been increased from 33% to 41% post-road dedication, or 42% to 49% pre-road dedication. It appears the forthcoming OCP will require 30% Open site Space.
    - The increased area will allow for larger trees, providing increased privacy, mitigating massing, and contributing the transition in scale.
    - The increased landscape area per the current scheme is sized to accommodate a program that will lend itself to sociability, including sitting areas, and herb gardens areas. Rooftop amenity space retained.
- Transitions
    - We have removed units on the south side of Level 6, providing a transition in scale to the adjacent lots, reducing the massing on the upper storeys, and minimizing shadowing and overlook, larger setbacks and rear yard open site space allow for larger trees to minimize privacy issues.
    - To redirect orientation away from the rear yard, the south-east unit has been mirrored and the balcony and sliding glass door have been moved form the rear to the east elevation. Balconies on the rear yard have been reduced from 5 to 3 and balcony setbacks have been increased to mitigate privacy concerns.

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- Rear yard facing balconies will have perforated screen guards to mitigate privacy impacts.
- The west elevation dwelling unit windows are clerestory or frosted to mitigate privacy impacts.
- Floors have been reduced from 11ft to 10ft to minimize building height.

- Family Housing Policy. Unit mix updated to achieve:
  - 8 x two-bedrooms (20.52%)
  - 2 x three-bedroom (5.12%)

Development Permit Guidelines

The proposal will be subject to the forthcoming General Urban Design Guidelines.

The design guidelines have been applied to generate a place sensitive design and build upon and improve the neighbourhood context.

Critical design guidelines that have been applied, include but are not limited to the below:

- 2.1 Site Planning and Building Orientation
  - 2.1.1 General Guidelines
    - 2.1.1.a. - Site and design buildings with a front-to-back orientation with primary facades facing streets and interior open spaces (rear yards) to achieve a perimeter block form of development.
    - 2.1.1.b. - Provide outdoor amenity spaces that create and contribute to a cohesive, green interior courtyard experience within the block.
    - 2.1.1.c. - Building sited and designed to protect significant trees and ensure integration of required tree planting and stormwater management.
    - 2.1.1.d. 0 - Punctuate highly visible sites, corner sites. Cladding articulation with a 3” recess, window fenestrations, rooftop trees, and ground-oriented patios are used to punctuate the corner condition.
    - 2.1.1.g. – Breaks in the façade are integrated with building form and composition.
    - 2.1.1.h. – Both street facing facades are developed as front elevations. This entails the use of an L-shaped massing and floorplate configuration.
    - 2.1.1.m. – All units provided with private outdoor balconies/patios.
    - 2.1.1.n. – Shared open space provided in the form of rear yard courtyard and rooftop patio.
  - 2.1.2 Vehicle Access, Parking and Back of House

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        - Parking (and access) is located under the building, away from protected trees, and away from Bay Street to minimize impact on adjacent streets, open spaces and urban forest.

- 2.2 Building-Open Space Interface
    - 2.2.1 General Guidelines
        - 2.2.1.a. – To support pedestrian activity, sociable open spaces and 'eyes on the street' Building facades designed with entryways, windows, patios and balconies to overlook sidewalks, walkways, and rear yard open spaces.
        - 2.2.1.b. - The primary building entrance has clear sight lines and is directly accessible from the public sidewalk.
        - 2.2.1.c. – Entrances emphasized with a combination of architectural detail, lighting and weather protection.
        - 2.2.1.e/f. Pedestrian scale sconce lighting used to highlight unit entrances and illuminate the public realm.
        - 2.2.1.g/h. – Parking is located under the building and away from Bay Street to be as unobtrusive to the public realm as possible.
    - 2.2.3 Residential Buildings
        - 2.2.3.a/b/f. – Residential units at street level have strong entry features including gates, fences, landscape beds, wayfinding and lighting to encourage interaction with the street while maintaining privacy and a transition to the public realm. All ground floor units have direct access to sidewalks via private patios.
- 2.3 Building Composition and Expression
    - a. The building designs has a simple forms and massing to address building performance objectives (including for building energy performance) and incorporates variation in facade treatments/cladding to achieve architectural interest.
        - Variation includes angled panels adjacent to windows to create a regular grid, and variation in façade material and depth to create hierarchy. Additional interest is found in custom balcony guards, including custom picket on the street facing facades and custom perforated metal on the rear yard for privacy.
    - i. Building is designed in east-west configuration, taking advantage of south facing solar orientation.
    - l. High quality, durable façade materials are proposed, including metal panel, and box rib metal siding with exterior insulation for thermal performance.
    - n. – Cladding material and colour varies to create a composition, rational grid in the façade and hierarchy.
- 2.4 Landscape and Open Site Space
    - 2.4.1.a/e. Open-site space is designed to be usable, attractive, ecologically functional and well-integrated with adjacent open space, streetscape and building design. The rear yard common area is designed as a quite courtyard, overhanging a rainwater garden, and integrated with large trees.
    - 2.4.1.b/c. Landscape treatments, including use of front patios, planting, metal picket fence and metal panel gates, wayfinding and sconce lighting help call out a residential entry and add interest along the street and sidewalk. Planters are provided between patios to create a green interface with sidewalk.
    - 2.4.1.o – Landscape design considers the local climate and water efficiency, including through selection of drought-tolerant plants, efficient irrigation systems or design of

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unirrigated landscapes, use of run-off for irrigation, integration of rain gardens and other approaches.

- 2.4.1.q. - The rear yard of the building, adjacent to lower-scale residential development, provides landscaping and trees that mitigate the appearance of massing and contribute to a transition in scale.

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 • 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
Rainwater Management and Green Infrastructure	• Stormwater management included via rain garden.
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 reducing heat sink.
Landscaping and Urban Forest	• Net increase in number of trees on site • Only native and adapted vegetation • Drought tolerant vegetation