

PROJECT:

ROCKLAND REDEVELOPMENT - HOTEL
1114 Rockland Avenue

Architect's Project Number: 25-001

Date: August 27, 2025

RE: LETTER TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Dear Mayor and Council –

Please accept this letter in support of the above-noted application. We wish to provide context on the project's evolution and the rationale for the current proposal.

A rezoning and development permit application was first submitted in July 2019, followed by a public hearing in March 2021. The project was approved and successfully rezoned from R3-A1 Low Profile Multiple Dwelling District to CA-93 Central Area (1114 Rockland) District. That approval secured 22 market units, including two one-bedroom homes to be sold for no more than 90% of fair market value. A building permit was submitted in October 2021.

The property subsequently changed ownership. The new owner sought to transition the project to rental housing, which required rezoning. That application was submitted in January 2023. In December 2024, a new stakeholder joined the ownership group.

Since 2019, construction costs have continued to rise, placing pressure on project viability. To remain feasible, the applicant determined that additional units were needed without expanding the building footprint, while also seeking ways to reduce costs.

At this point, the project evolved from residential use to visitor accommodation.

With respect to the proposed Official Community Plan 2050, the property sits at the edge of the Downtown Core District and within a Priority Growth Area of Residential Fabric. Built Form Guidance for the Residential Fabric references intensive residential forms, while Land Use Guidance for the Downtown Core specifically includes visitor accommodation. Under the proposed Zoning Modernization, the Town Centre District – 1 Zone (TCD-1) lists hotel as a permitted use.

The rationale for this shift is twofold:

- The neighbourhood already has a large number of residential units underway.
- Aside from the Hyatt now under construction, Victoria has not seen a new hotel in over 20 years. This location is highly suitable for a hotel.

The building has been adapted to meet the City's definition of a hotel, including the addition of a staffed lobby with a guest register. This change allowed us to reconfigure the interior and reduce costs while preserving the building's exterior character. The number of units increased modestly from 22 to 30, all designed as hotel rooms with kitchenettes; some include one or two bedrooms.

Importantly, exiting from the rear stair has been accommodated at grade. Also vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and storage requirements are reduced for transient accommodation. This enabled elimination of the basement level by relocating service functions to the parking level. This not only reduces construction costs but also significantly lessens impact on the neighbouring sequoia tree.

We believe this project represents both a viable solution for the applicant and a net benefit to the City—addressing the identified need for housing in the form of transient accommodation while bringing new life to a vacant site once occupied by a derelict building.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Heather Spinney, Architect AIBC, CPHD
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