

November 6, 2020

Mayor Helps & Council
City of Victoria
City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

RE: 1150 Cook Street - Application for Development Permit

File: DVP No. 00130

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

We are pleased to submit this letter on behalf of the project's developer, 66 Developments Ltd, to accompany their Application for a Development Permit for the above noted property.

Description of Proposal

The proposal is to develop the property within the existing zone of R-48 Harris Green District. The proposal also meets the goals and objectives for density and building height of the Core Residential designation within Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP).

- Proposed Uses: A residential building with Ground Level commercial and bicycle parking uses
- Proposed Building Height: 47.57m and 16 storeys
- Proposed Setbacks

	Level 01	Level 02 & 03	Level 04	Level 05 -15
Front Yard (Cook Street)	1.7m	0.5m	3.4m	2.8m
Rear Yard	0.1m	0m	4.8m	4.8m
Side Yard North	1.9m	0m	3.7m	2.1m
Side Yard South	0.1m	0m	5.9m	5.9m

- Proposed Floor Space Ratio (Lot Area = 1,009m²): FSR = 7.78
- Type of Tenure Provided: Strata ownership
- Proposed Dwelling Units: 129 Units
- Parking provided: 41 stalls
- Bicycle Parking provided: 143 long-term spaces, 14 short-term spaces

Government Policies

1150 Cook Street is located in downtown Victoria within the Urban Core (Core Residential Designation) of the OCP. The development proposal aligns with Victoria's OCP values by ensuring an increase to the urban core housing stock, a strengthening of social resources and the public realm, and the reinforcement of downtown Victoria vibrancy through contemporary design and collaboration with city planners and community stakeholders.

The Core Residential Designation defines building forms of multi-unit residential buildings to be up to 20 storeys in height, with three- to five-storey podium facades to define the public realm. The theoretical density (R-48 has no defined FSR) calculated for the site is 9.69. As noted in the OCP, Harris Green is a key high-density residential neighbourhood in the Urban Core. With rising population growth and residents of Victoria looking for places to live and work, the proposed project for 1150 Cook Street will help to satisfy the burgeoning demand for medium to high residential densities within downtown Victoria.

Project Benefits and Amenities

Project benefits for this development will include an increase of the urban housing stock within the Core Residential Designation, streetscape upgrades to meet the transportation and pedestrian mobility requirements within the OCP and new commercial opportunities to better integrate and flourish with the local urban fabric.

Being able to accommodate the anticipated growth and density that the City of Victoria is projecting for the future allow the Harris Green Neighbourhood to benefit from an increase in a variety of residential housing stock.

Streetscape upgrades will be conducted to ensure continuous accessible design across the frontage as well as to meet Victoria's OCP and Victoria's Pedestrian Master Plan strategies. Commercial retail units at grade are proposed to offer amenities to the building residents as well as to better engage the local community. In addition, a social community gathering area is being suggested for the southwest corner of the intersection of Cook and View Streets.

Need and Demand

Development of the site is required to better reflect the growing urban landscape of downtown Victoria. In aligning with the OCP, the proposed mixed-use building will serve the needs of residents and the community. Planning guidelines and local demand will be met by providing a higher-density project, expanding local retail spaces, improving the vitality and livability of the public realm and offering a well-designed and contemporary built form within the Downtown Core Area.

Neighbourhood

1150 Cook Street is located at the southwest corner of Cook and View Streets. A long-time gas station brownfield site, it will be environmentally remediated as part of the proposed development. East of the subject property are multi-family buildings at 1020, 1039 and 1051 View Street. These buildings are 17, 11 and 9 levels, respectively. Immediately north of the site are car dealerships on both the east and west sides of Cook Street. There is currently a proposal with the City of Victoria for the car dealership across View Street to the North. That proposal contemplates over 400,000 sf of area and two towers of 17 and 19 storeys. To the south and west of the site are low rise office buildings.

The existing site warrants development based upon the dynamic status of the neighbourhood and the need to densify and improve the current streetscape and pedestrian realm. The proposed development will relate to the local neighbourhood by representing the visions and goals of the Harris Green Neighbourhood. A brownfield site will be re-invigorated with contemporary architecture and enhanced public realm.

City Staff and Community Consultation

The Developer has met with City staff on several occasions. Staff have been supportive of the project and collegial in assisting the development team in working through both functional building issues and aesthetic design. Given the relatively small size of the site, challenges exist. The collaborative manner in which staff have approached the project has been both refreshing and helpful. We are pleased that we have been able to maintain the initial design concept, while incorporating many of the functional necessities of such a building.

The Downtown Residents Association (DRA) was also consulted and provided valuable input. The increased landscaping on the podium and the community plaza at the corner of View and Cook Streets are, in part, responses to comments received from the DRA. Efforts from all stakeholders early in the process have generated an elegant building that is functional and community-facing.

Impacts

By engaging with the ground-orientated commercial retail units, benefiting from the increase in dwelling units for the area, utilizing the enhanced public realm and enjoying the contemporary streetscape and building design, the local community will experience a positive impact from the development.

Neighbouring properties will experience an increase in activity and use and benefit from the positive impact to local commercial businesses.

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

1150 Cook falls within the DPA3(HC) Development Permit Area. The proposed development meets the stated purpose of revitalizing the area through a residential development with active commercial at street level. Multi-unit residential is encouraged in the form of mid-to-high-rise above ground-level commercial.

The proposal complies with these guidelines by helping to revitalize and animate Cook Street, enhancing appearance through high quality architecture responsive to the context, and enhancing the pedestrian experience through human scale urban design, compatible with street function.

Building Design

The building's mass is composed of three distinct elements: a ground level commercial base, a two-storey residential podium and a thirteen-storey residential tower above. The three lower levels combine to form the primary street wall along Cook Street, matching the height of the 3 storey office building to the South and the 3-storey apartment building across Fort Street.

The generous setback of the commercial frontage allows for additional public, weather-protected space along Cook Street. This space, in combination with proposed off-site improvements near the View Street corner will help achieve the enhanced pedestrian experience referred to in the above section.

Asymmetrically placed "Juliette" balconies framed by shadow boxes were used to add visual interest to East and West Facades. The design concept differentiates the top floor through the increase in the height of top floor windows, Juliette boxes and external room ceilings by 600 mm and the widening of the top horizontal band. The translucent glass railings located inboard will be attached to the inside of the step in the roof. The combined height of the raised outer roof and railing will now be approximately 1.8 m above the main roof, which will effectively screen most of the elevator mechanical penthouse and any roof mounted HVAC equipment.

With its slim floor plate, the tower component was configured as a vertical element, in contrast to the podium's horizontal character. A 1.7m shift in the tower's floor plate was introduced in order to further reinforce the vertical expression of North and South facades. The tower's strong presence at the corner of Cook and View streets serves as an important Downtown Core Area boundary marker.

Four fully developed building frontages are integral to the project. Natural light is abundant in every home and every home is extremely private. In addition to the luxury of two street frontages and a very wide Cook street boulevard, the view / light impact of the building to the West is limited due to its narrow profile and no inhabited room glazing oriented towards our project for the distance of approx. 100'. Further adding to the livability of our homes is that the building to the South is only 3 levels and it is unlikely to be developed in the near future, as it was recently fully renovated.

Unit orientation in four directions is fundamental to the project, given the small size of the site, point tower design, and the project's objective to create compact, efficient, livable and affordable units. The efficient central core is critical to the achievement of this goal through the reduction of common and internal unit circulation. Additionally, a centrally located core with wrap-around units is essential to the seismic design of the project.

Building Height and 1:5 Setback Ratio Line

The current R-48 zoning limits the maximum building height to 10 storeys and 30m. For this project, a height of 16 storeys and 47.57m is proposed, in conformance with applicable OCP Guidelines. Further, we believe this height is appropriate for the following reasons:

- The project's most immediate context includes existing buildings with heights ranging between 9 and 17 storeys and a proposed development with 17- and 19- storey towers
- The proposed height is reasonable in proportion to the 30m Cook Street width
- Additional height has little shadowing impact on Cook Street owing to its North-South alignment
- Helps reinforce the building's role as the Downtown Area gateway marker

We believe the above rationale also applies to the encroachment of upper storeys into the 1:5 setback ratio line. Stepping the building mass back at levels 11 – 12 would undermine the building's design intent and its role as an important urban marker along Cook Street. Additionally, our comprehensive analysis has shown that the adherence to the 1:5 setback would actually have a negative impact on Olympic Mountains views along Cook Street.

Safety and Security

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is important for this development as it will offer safety and security for residents and commercial users on-site. Strategies to reduce crime, the opportunity for crime, or the fear of crime which are to be implemented include:

- Dwelling units clustered together to create neighbour-to-neighbour surveillance
- Landscape design to allow clear, unobstructed views
- Walkway and entries are visible, well-lit and overlooked by windows
- Window constructed of clear glazing to overlook public/private spaces
- Glazed doors in stairwells and parkades lobbies, white or light colour paint schemes and elimination of dead ends and sharp corners
- Mixed use development to encourage the presence of people at all times
- Reduction of entrapment spots by the use of glazing in doors and windows
- Commercial units on the ground floor to create an active streetscape

Transportation

1150 Cook Street is located along the arterial of Cook Street. The project exceeds the R-48 zoning parking requirements and complies with requirements of the current Zoning Bylaw Schedule C-Off-Street Parking requirements for bicycles. Bicycle parking will be within a safe and secure facility, located at street level, making it easily accessible.

Increased bicycle usage by residents will be further facilitated through proximity to existing and future network of Greenways, including Fort Street bike lanes one block away and the soon-to-be-constructed bike lanes along Vancouver street.

Located on an arterial within the Urban Core of Downtown Victoria, public transportation opportunities are frequent. Although there are no vehicle parking requirements under the current zoning, and it is our hope that the primary modes of transportation for the future residents of the building will be foot and bike (given the proximity to the commercial core), approximately 40 parking stalls will be provided.

In summary, we believe this proposal offers significant benefits to residents of Victoria in terms of quality, livability and moderately priced accommodation. We also believe that, in its present form the project will, through its strong design make a significant contribution to the city's evolving urban fabric.

Design & Green Building Features

- Thoughtful and practical design of purpose-built rental and street level commercial
- Building design following the new BCBC 2018 Step Code
- Sensitive integration of the development at street level and positive definition of open space and landmark created at the upper levels.
- The podium encourages active retail use and reinforces the continuous street wall concept.
- High performance building envelope with durable and low maintenance cladding material. Reduced use of spandrel panels in favour of insulated metal panels.
- Minimized articulation of the exterior shell to reduce heat loss.
- Location of the taller section of the development closer to the outside perimeter of the site in order to increase sunlight penetration and enhanced privacy.
- Flexible outdoor common space on the podium roof designed to foster interaction within the community of the building.
- Landscape treatments to provide privacy for resident patios and buffer to the adjacent streets and neighbouring properties
- Site landscaping with use of low-flow, drip irrigation
- Site planting to utilize drought tolerant native or adaptive vegetation
- Energy-efficient lighting and electrical systems
- Low flush toilets and high efficiency plumbing fixtures
- High efficiency heat pump system for heating and cooling
- Construction waste management during construction

Yours truly,

NSDA Architects



Tom Staniszakis, Architect AIBC, AAA
Principal

cc. Dan Robbins, 66 Developments Ltd.