



PROJECT:

ROCKLAND REDEVELOPMENT - HOTEL
1114 Rockland Avenue

Architect's Project Number: 25-001

Date: May 01, 2026

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, the rationale for the current proposal, and recent updates to the design.

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.

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 and was recently featured in a CTV News segment that aired on April 28, 2026: https://youtu.be/rIMiE4pZHwl?si=Kzc_kH6K9FdD6NX-

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. Vehicle parking, bicycle parking, and storage requirements are reduced for transient accommodation, which enabled the 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.

Recent Design Updates

In response to staff feedback and to better align with the intent of the General Residential District – 1 (GRD-1) Zone, the floorplans and site layout have been further refined. The updated design reduces variation from GRD-1 provisions while improving overall site performance and livability.

- Open lot space, landscaped area, and hardscape area requirements are now met.
- Rear and side yard setbacks have been increased compared to the previous submission.
- Levels 5 and 6 have been stepped back to further increase side setbacks and improve the building's perceived massing and appearance.
- Hotel units have been redesigned to provide flexibility, allowing smaller units to function as lock-off suites in combination with larger units to better accommodate families and extended stays.

- The parking layout has been revised and optimized to improve maneuverability. While the total number of parking stalls have been reduced, the proposal exceeds bicycle parking requirements by providing six oversized bicycle spaces where only two are required, supporting a broader range of mobility options.
- Large private balconies have been incorporated for larger units, aligning with the intent of GRD-1 requirements and enhancing livability for longer-stay guests.

These revisions strengthen the project's compatibility with the surrounding context and reinforce a sensitive transition to adjacent properties.

Policy and Guideline Consistency

The subject property is zoned General Residential District – 1 Zone (GRD-1), which does not currently permit hotel use. A site-specific text amendment is therefore required to add visitor accommodation as a permitted use.

The proposal is consistent with the broader policy direction of the Official Community Plan, which envisions an adequate supply of visitor accommodation across all price points and visitor segments, with a target of 1,500 new hotel rooms by 2035. While the OCP encourages clustering of visitor services within the Inner Harbour, Downtown Core, Town Centres, and Villages, the subject site is considered appropriate for this use given its immediate proximity to the Downtown Core.

The Rezoning and Development Policy supports visitor accommodation uses in these key areas and defers to OCP guidance for locations outside them. In this context, the proposal represents a reasonable and supportable extension of visitor-serving uses at the edge of downtown.

From a design standpoint, the project conforms where possible to key urban design objectives, most notably the perimeter block form, contributing to a coherent streetscape and pedestrian-friendly environment.

The site is located within Development Permit Area 1: General Urban Design and directly abuts Development Permit Area 2: Downtown Core Area. The proposal responds to the objectives of DPA 1 by:

- Protecting the natural environment, including minimizing impact on the existing sequoia tree;
- Establishing a high-quality form and character appropriate for urban development;
- Supporting energy conservation through efficient building design;
- Promoting water conservation; and
- Contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through compact, centrally located development.

Conclusion

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

We respectfully request Council's support for the proposed site-specific amendment to the GRD-1 Zone to allow this project to proceed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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