



January 23, 2021

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria

Re: 1475 Fort Street, DPV00120

There is much to be concerned about the 1475 Fort Street project and issues that require clear answers. The affected neighbours of 1475 Fort Street have communicated their concerns clearly and forcefully. The City promises a thorough hearing delivering through its endorsement of the IAP2 process. Will we see the individual's concerns thoroughly addressed by the project proponents and Development Services?

This building has significantly reduced setbacks from the RE-AM2 zone of 50% of building height. The neighbors to the south have a massive wall a mere 4 m. /13 ft. from their property line where 6.5 m. / 21 ft. is required in by zoning. The third and fourth floors of the building are very invasive. How can this invasion of privacy be justified?

We are told this project is being developed under the old *1981/03 Advisory Design Guidelines* which do state that massing and scale, adjacent properties and major building elements to each other and adjacent buildings be taken into consideration.

Unfortunately, this project does not consider the more nuanced – and current! – *2012/19 Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential* which provide 1.2 “Where new development is directly abutting lands in a different OCP Urban Place Designation the design should provide a transition between areas in way that respond to established form and character.” Additional Guidelines 1.5, 1.6, 1.6.1 provide direction to transition in form and massing and 1.6.2 design to address privacy are not considered; apparently because the city has not developed neighborhood plans in a timely matter and they do not include the newest edition in Neighborhood Plans. Is it not responsible nor logical that the 2012/19 guidelines are not considered in the design of this building – why should neighbours have to bear the impact of this nonsensical omission in the process? Why can there not be an amendment to the OCP directly instituting the updated guidelines rather than waiting indefinitely for the individual Neighborhood Plans to be updated? In the meantime, real life decision that have significant impact to residents are being made in the absence of current guidelines that the City developed in the first place!

The size and scale of this project creates considerable afternoon and evening shading on the properties to the east reducing the possible afternoon enjoyment of their backyards. Likewise, there is significant morning shading to the property to the west. Reduced mass would reduce these impacts. Were the shadow impacts on abutting neighbors considered and what changes were made to reduce those impacts?

The project requires the removal of ten significant trees including two protected Big Leaf Maples; according to the report to council this is being done to enable lot-encompassing underground parking for enhanced rental opportunities. We are now left with a proposed site reduced to potted planting where large, mature trees currently stand. While expensive, why was multi-tiered parking under the building proper not required if the proponent's goal is to enhance rental values and the city's supposed goal is to retain our remaining critical natural habitat? Where is the weighing of long-term societal benefit vs short term financial gain?

This project moved ahead as a Development Permit with Variance rather than a Rezoning, resulting in an abbreviated public consultation process even though it required a change in density without the parking to support that increase in density. R3-AM2 requires parking for 45 vehicles. Schedule C enables 36 space for rental sites. This project never offered the required parking. How is it that the density of 1.6:1 could be allotted on undelivered parking rather than the zoned 1.2:1 and bypass a rezoning? After enquiries to planning and the city solicitor it appears that decision was made as a city privilege. What specifically in the Local Government Act enabled this process when changes to uses or density specifically require a rezoning as stated in the city's Citizens Guide to the Rezoning Process, Para. 1. - What is a rezoning?

We trust the questions we have raised will be answered comprehensively and that the COTW will carefully consider the adequacy of the responses. In the end, this proposal requires the destruction of truly affordable rental accommodation and has a significantly negative impact to surrounding neighbors. The neighbors are supportive of a 4-storey development but they wish to see a project that is of suitable scope to provide a sensitive transition to the surrounding Traditional Neighbourhood.

Regards,

Bob June
Chair, Land Use Committee
Rockland Neighbourhood Association