

July 8th, 2018

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square, Victoria, B.C.

RE: 1010 Fort Street, Rezoning and Development Permit Application

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am pleased to re-submit for your consideration a rezoning and development permit application for 1010 Fort Street, which will deliver 55 units of purpose-built rental housing, secured through a housing agreement in perpetuity. We are pleased to inform you that the proposal includes a number of family friendly units – 31% - 2 Bed, 2% - 2Bed/Den (up from 17% 2 Bed in our previous proposal) and a new commercial retail space that will add to the vibrancy of Fort Street. Additionally, the project will also include 10 affordable units to satisfy a commitment from the rezoning of our 1201 Fort Street project.

The retail space on the main floor will host a coffee shop that will offer residents a secondary social area to compliment the proposed rooftop amenity area. The addition of new residents and retail space will further strengthen the role of Fort Street as a destination within Victoria, while continuing to recognize its importance as a key movement corridor for transit, cyclists, pedestrians and vehicles alike.

The proposals location in the heart of downtown and the site is located on the Fort Street bike lane corridor. Abundant bicycle parking and direct access to the new Fort Street cycle lanes, combined with existing transit will afford residents the chance to participate in the active, walkable lifestyle that defines Downtown Victoria.

Although we recognize the walkability of this site, the City has indicated to us that Schedule C of the zoning bylaw would require parking on site for this proposal. As a smaller site that has very poor soil conditions – we have chosen to provide some parking (7 spaces) however we have focused our efforts on providing an excellent bicycle parking experience on this site. To this end we have incorporated 55 Class 1 bike parking spaces, a bike wash and a cargo bike area – in a premium enclosed area of the parkade. As a downtown rental building, located directly on a major bike lane, – we believe a number of our tenants will not require parking and are choosing to live a car free lifestyle in a downtown location. Our 7 parking stall results in a 1:0.13 parking ratio. The existing zoning on the site permits a 4 storey mixed use building with zero parking.

Finally, I want to note that a CAC has not been proposed for this project, as we understand Council's draft CAC Policy excludes purpose-built rental housing projects. Also, of note to Council is the provision of 10 *affordable* rental units in this proposal. These units are being provided to satisfy Abstract Developments CAC commitment for the rezoning of 1201 Fort Street. These units do not represent a CAC for the current proposal and their space is included in the FSR calculations.



In terms of the siting of this building – it should be stressed that the current bike lanes, off site parking and site access to this property will not change. In short, all these existing site conditions will not be effected by this new project.

I thank you for your consideration and we look forward to advancing this project with staff and council.

Warm Regards,

Michael Bacon, B.E.S., M.Arch
Development Manager



Description of Proposal

The proposal for 1010 Fort Street is to rezone from the CA-42 Zone - Harris Green Commercial District, to a new site-specific zone suited for the increasing density and evolving framework of Downtown Victoria. The proposed rezoning will meet the goals and objectives for density and building height in the Core Residential designation within Victoria's Official Community Plan and Downtown Core Area Plan.

The redesigned proposal addresses the Design Guidelines from the DCAP, including podium height and upper level setbacks. The narrowness of the lot at 1010 Fort has proven to be challenging – but we have been able to achieve all setbacks associated with upper level setbacks – with the exception of those that occur on the east / west directions – for the upper 3 floors. In this regard we have achieved all lower level setbacks in both the north/south and east west directions, all upper level setbacks in the north / south direction – but as stated, the narrowness of the site – makes the east west upper floor setbacks difficult to achieve. The FSR (5.40) and height (12 storeys) of the project are also generally consistent with the direction of the Downtown Core Area Plan.

Project Benefits and Amenities

The primary benefit of this development proposal is an increase of rental housing stock within the Core Residential designation. Of significant importance is the fact that a substantial number of the units are suitable for family housing (31% of units are two beds, and 2% of units are 2 bed + Den for a combined total of 33% of all units). Of the 55 total units, 10 will also be allocated as affordable rental units in order to satisfy Abstract Development's commitment to provide 10 affordable rental units, per the CAC for the rezoning of 1201 Fort Street.

In addition to new rental residential space, the project will also include new commercial retail space that will be used for a coffee shop, further activating the fabulous Fort Street Corridor. New sidewalks with a surface treatment designed to meet the Downtown Public Realm Plan will be provided and will improve the experience for pedestrians. Some ground level landscaping will also enhance this experience. It is important to note that the recently completed bike lanes along Fort will remain in tact and not be affected by this proposal.

- The Harris Green neighbourhood will benefit from an increase in family friendly rental housing options.
- The city's significant political and capital investment into the Fort Street cycling lanes will be leveraged for the creation of a building with superior bicycle parking and reduced vehicle parking. This will offer new options for families searching for affordability, by allowing them to live a car-free lifestyle.
- The project is proposed to house 10 affordable rental units (5 in income quartile 2 and 5 in income quartile 3), as part of Abstract Development's commitment as part of a CAC for the rezoning of 1201 Fort Street.
- Streetscape upgrades will be constructed to ensure continuous accessible design across the frontage as well as to meet Victoria's OCP.
- A commercial retail unit at grade, envisioned to be a coffee shop or café is proposed. This space will offer amenities to the building residents as well as expand the food options in the local community.



Neighbourhood

1010 Fort Street is located east of 1006 Fort Street (an existing 3.5 storey commercial building), west of 1012 Fort Street (an existing single storey commercial building), north of 1007 and 1011 Fort Street (existing 4 storey commercial buildings) and south of 1029 View Street (a development site currently under construction, that will be the home of the “Jukebox”, a market housing project).

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

1010 Fort Street falls within the DPA 7B (HC): Corridors Heritage Development Permit Area. The proposed development meets the Corridors Heritage purpose of revitalizing the area through a residential development with active commercial at the grade level. Multi-unit residential is encouraged to be intensified to medium-high density along Fort Street between Cook and Douglas streets.

The proposal complies with these guidelines by helping to revitalize the secondary arterial of Fort Street, improving the appearance of the corridor, particularly at the pedestrian level where the brick and glass façade is a major improvement over the existing structure on the site. The pedestrian and cycling experience will be improved through human scale urban design, which is compatible with the new cycling infrastructure on Fort.

Transportation

1010 Fort St is located along the secondary arterial of Fort Street, between the Cook Street arterial to the east and the Vancouver Street collector to the west. Transit service operates in the Fort Street Corridor and a new two-way, separated cycling facility is located along the southern frontage of the subject site. No off-street parking is proposed for the project and the current zoning has a provision that allows narrow lots such as 1010 Fort to exclude vehicle parking. Specifically, the CA-42 zone notes that “no parking is required for a lot that has an area of not more than 650 m² or a width of not more than 18.5 m”. The site area of 1010 Fort is 628.29 m² and the width of the lot is 18.03 m, making it possible to exclude parking under either provision. The current zone allows for 4 storeys of mixed use commercial / residential development with an FSR of 2.5 and no off-street parking.

As we are creating a site specific zone for this project, parking requirements under Schedule C would be 36 cars plus 6 visitor parking. We will be requesting a parking variance as our plans show 7 parking spaces. In addition, we will be providing 55 Class 1 Bicycle Stalls, 6 Class 2 and a bike wash and a cargo bike parking area.

Due to extremely poor soil conditions on our site, as well as the narrowness of the site, we are not able to achieve any further under building parking on the site.

Mitigating factors in the variance are the location of the building downtown which provides future residents with the option to walk, cycle and use transit as their primary ways of moving around the City. Given the mix of land uses around the site and the key destinations within short walking distance, we are confident our proposal can be introduced to the neighbourhood without creating an undue burden on the neighbourhood or the supply of parking intended to serve the local businesses along Fort Street.



We are excited at a chance to introduce a new option for families trying to achieve affordability in a city that has seen surging home prices. By offering an opportunity to have a car free lifestyle, transportation costs can be eliminated from household budgets, young families and those working in the service industries will have a greater proportion of disposable income available to save or put back into the local economy. What better location than our downtown core to offer this type of opportunity.

Heritage

The existing building on site does not have heritage value and no heritage designated buildings will be impacted by the development of this proposal. The proposal is located on the Fort Street corridor which has a number of heritage buildings along it. Our proposal responds to these buildings by using a brick building material at street level – which will be reflective of other heritage buildings in the area. This material will carry up into the first 3 floors of residential – further enhancing the “heritage aspects of the site.

Green Buildings

Green building features within the building will employ passive and active strategies such as efficient suite layout to maximize livability, shading and overhangs across the facades, efficient use of durable and long-lasting building products, use of contemporary heating and cooling systems, and high performance envelope and glazing design.

We are currently analyzing the option of building a CLT (Cross Laminated Timber) Building at this location – which is a building typology currently being promoted by the province and considered to be among the greenest building technologies available.

Infrastructure

Being located in the downtown Core of Victoria, there is currently adequate sewer, water, sidewalks, roads and parks within the area. Infrastructure improvements will be provided as required by the City of Victoria.

Again, It should be noted that the recently completed bike lane and on street parking configuration will not be adjusted as a result of this building. We are proposing to maintain the existing building access point.

Thank you for your consideration of this project, and we look forward to working with the City in moving this project forward.

Michael Bacon
Development Manager
NVision Properties

