

1201 Fort Street / 1050 Pentrelew Place

Dear Mayor and Council,

This is a synopsis of the various arguments made by people who have written letters supporting this proposal, people who attended the public meetings and communicated their opinions through various media outlets and online, and includes comments made by City Staff and some Councillors.

I thought that it would be a useful checklist for each Councillor to fully understand the arguments in favour of the proposal for 1201 Fort Street and 1050 Pentrelew Place. A warning: some of them are contradictory to each other.

It might also be fun to check off those that you may agree with, just to see where you stand before the important night.

It is apparent

- That this proposal was developed to this scale, size and massing to address the concerns of local residents.
- That the last 23 months of public engagement with the local community by the applicant resulted in this amended design that is fully supported by the local community.
- That the Official Community Plan that governs this proposal was developed organically by and for the residents of Victoria.
- That the proposal represents a balanced and fair interpretation of the Official Community Plan.
- That the Director of Planning and Sustainability is the final arbiter of who can correctly interpret the Official Community Plan.
- That we should trust City Staff and follow their direction.
- That the Official Community Plan should be amended for this proposal.
- That this proposal will be one of approximately 700 different site-specific zones in the City in no way diminishes the importance of the Official Community Plan.
- That this proposal fits the land size remarkably well and there is no transition problem to the neighbourhood.
- That there is no problem of overlook from 21 meters down to 7.6 meters.
- That the fears of local neighbours are unfounded.
- That the opposition to this proposal only want this property to be a park or a community center.
- That a smaller alternative development of approximately 50 housing units comprising a multi-unit building on Fort Street with ground-oriented multi-

unit housing on the larger residential zone proposed by the opposition is insufficient.

- That the opposition to this proposal are unwilling to compromise in any way.
- That building more upscale luxury housing will solve the housing crisis.
- That the scale and size of this development will solve the housing crisis.
- That building more luxury housing units is the solution to lessening the price of all housing.
- That the fact that housing prices continue to rise despite our accelerated building in Victoria only means we need to build even more upscale condominiums at an even faster rate.
- That all expensive housing units become affordable because of the trickle down theory.
- That the Community Amenity Calculation and Density Bonus on this site is zero, (even though other BC cities would calculate them at approximately \$2.6 million for this proposal.)
- That a promise of ten units of affordable housing of whatever size and whatever quality on another site, within two years is acceptable.
- That we should be grateful for the offer of ten affordable units in exchange for the increased zoning which will amount to approximately \$32 million extra for the applicant.
- That the equivalent cash value of \$250,000.00 for the ten units if they are not built is satisfactory.
- That the massing and height of the 6-storey building on Fort Street complements the heritage corridor of Fort Street.
- That the acceptance of this proposal will not become the justification for other buildings of 6 storeys along this corridor.
- That the acceptance of this proposal will not pave the way for other projects of this size, height and massing extending beyond the corridor zone into a residential zone.
- That the acceptance of this proposal will not encourage others to apply for variances up to 15.1 meters in residential zones.
- That the narrow walkway for the Pemberton Trail is a valid reason to accept this proposal.
- That some local residents have somehow intimidated a few people, as yet unknown, who wish to remain anonymous and this is a valid concern.
- That no one who speaks for the proposal at the public hearing is connected financially, or otherwise, with the developer, and it is unimportant that they disclose any association in any event.
- That the 15 or so people in the front rows at the December 14 COTW meeting affiliated with the applicant were not meant to be intimidating.

- That any other recognizable group that may show up at the April 12, 2018 Public Hearing is not meant to suggest any thing or intimidate anyone.
- That the entire process, and each of its segments, is not, in itself, overwhelming for a normal person.
- That participating in this process, whether learning the details, writing a letter, or attending a meeting is easy and fun because everyone has lots of leisure and extra time, and the details and many changes in the proposal are easy to comprehend and stay up to date with.
- That an official notice of six days in the local newspaper is enough notice to give anyone adequate time to respond to this development proposal.
- That an official mailing (posted 10 days prior to the Public Hearing and received 4 days later) to residents within only 100 meters of the property is enough to reach the broader public in time to attend a Public Hearing to decide the important issue of an amendment to the Official Community Plan.
- That anyone in opposition is a Nimby.
- That the high cost of housing is, in large part, due to special interest and local neighbourhood groups that delay large development projects because of nimbyism.
- That anyone in opposition to the application is afraid of the future.
- That the opinion of the broader public is more important than local voices.
- That petitions do not matter.
- That people who send in checklists cannot think for themselves.
- That the developer is a great guy.
- That the applicant has spent considerable time, effort money on these plans and deserves to have them accepted.
- That this proposal should be accepted because we do not know what the applicant may propose next time.
- That the applicant has shown his eagerness to compromise by the many amendments to this proposal.
- That the opponents to this proposal do not want young people in their neighbourhood.
- That the opponents do not want young people to have any opportunity to buy the affordable housing available in this complex.
- That there is no problem with this proposal, but there is a problem with the Rockland Neighbourhood Association and other Land Use Committees.
- That the City must approve the building of more housing for those people who want to move here in the future despite the concerns of local residents.
- That the local neighbourhood should sacrifice itself for the greater good of solving the density needs of our City.

Believe me, reading all that correspondence from the last three Committee of the Whole meetings and those posted on the website for the Public Hearing, plus keeping track of Letters to the Editor and other media sources took a lot of time. But, I believe that I have captured nearly all of the arguments. I have not weighted them for the number of times each has been stated, because I think that, realistically speaking, most of them are only opinions, not expressions of fact.

A lack of justifiable facts is a definite weakness to the proponent's side, of course. But, most of us on the opposition side have come to realize that many people are really driven in their thinking by pre-conceived ideas, not facts that, more often than not, are inconvenient and get in the way of a strong pre-conceived idea. These hard-held ideas are not often changed easily.

To most of us on the opposition side, this list of arguments is largely a list of misconceptions, misstatements and some downright fallacies. You will be reading many of them in the letters attached to this proposal, and will, undoubtedly, hear many of them the night of the Public Hearing.

I find it hard to align myself with most of these opinions, and because some of the arguments set such a very low bar, I cannot accept them. It is much easier to hold onto facts and change one's opinion based on them. Because of this, I would urge you, as my elected representatives, to vote against the acceptance of this development proposal.

Thank you,

Don Cal  
1059 Pentrelew Place