

I have no connection to the applicant.

For two years, I've watched the neighbours struggle with this ill-fitting, proposal and, in the process, go through utter hell. Their quiet lives, as families, and seniors who have lived in their houses for 40+ years, have been completely shattered by this relentless threat. The stress has been extreme.

It has been a terrifying onslaught that has left people exhausted and despairing. No one on Council wants that to be the experience of its citizens. Home is where the heart is, whether our houses are big, small, fancy or modest, they are our shelters and our sanctuaries. And in some ways, this process has been like an interminable home invasion.

The neighbours have desperately tried to get the applicant to listen to them. But he has not. He has completely ignored the very reasonable compromise they offered. He minimally responded to even Council's directives. The young owners of 1050 Pentrelew were so upset by the applicant's schemes that they eventually sold the home they loved and left the neighbourhood. That home - along with its rental suite - will be headed for the landfill. The neighbours have exhausted themselves in their efforts to show Council how misplaced the proposed buildings are in this low-scale, traditional residential area. To impress upon Council how devastated lane-like Pentrelew Place will be by such overbuilding. They have been eloquent and impassioned. Frankly, they have been amazing. I've never seen people devote so much to researching and engaging with the community in the service of defending their neighbourhood.

This site, at the entranceway to historic Rockland, the last remnant of urban forest on Fort Street from harbour to Oak Bay, immediately beside a beautiful heritage building, on a heritage corridor, 72% percent of the site protected by the OCP's commitment to retaining the traditional residential zone, deserves much much better. Any applicant who valued the huge sequoias and Garry oaks there, who appreciated the rarity of an historic neighbourhood in Victoria, who was willing to work with the people who have lived here for decades, who was less fixated on maximum profit, and who had the creativity to work with instead of against this unique property, would have proposed something far, far more suitable.

Instead, what we have is a proposal for something you could find in any downtown. But this very much isn't downtown. It's on a heritage corridor. What we allow to be built here should be special. It should enhance this neighbourhood, not detract horribly from it, making us feel as if we were, indeed, living right downtown.

Please don't be fooled into believing that the trees will survive. The massive blasting being proposed for this site invades the critical root zones of most of the Garry oaks and significant trees. Any green space that remains will be chopped up so that it is barely recognizable.

Every councillor promised in the election to respect existing zoning, to support appropriate rezoning that enhances neighbourhoods or at least to listen to the most affected neighbours.

Over 80% of the correspondence you have received is urging you to decline this overdevelopment. We're angry, and we should be. Overblown projects this blatantly misplaced should not be pushed through the system for two years, sickening and demoralizing the neighbours.

Please respect their wishes, especially the heartfelt appeals of the people who stand to lose the most - the immediate neighbours.

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