

November 10, 2020

Mayor Lisa Helps & Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

Re: Development Permit Applications for Harris Green Village, Phase 1 (1033, 1043, 1045 & 1061 Yates St)

Dear Mayor Helps & Council:

On behalf of Starlight Developments, CitySpaces and the consultant team are pleased to submit updated plans and documentation to the original Development Permit application for the first phase of a master plan development located at the east half of the 1000 block Yates Street, bounded by Yates, Cook and View Streets. This letter provides context for the project and describes the changes made to the plans in response to the technical review and the collaborative interaction of the design team with City staff. The changes reflect refinement of design elements made to the Harris Green Village Urban Design Manual and Rezoning Booklet, as applied specifically to this site within the overall multi-phase development.

This application should be considered in context with the updated Harris Green Village *Urban Design Manual* and *Rezoning Booklet*, which define the urban design strategy and massing framework, and establish the public realm contributions and other amenities that will be achieved throughout the project.

Project Description Background

This is predominantly a residential rental project with ground-oriented retail and second level childcare space. The plans envision 34,181.7 m² (367,928.8 sf) of residential space (equivalent to approximately 510 units) in a full mix of unit sizes and types. An enhanced corner plaza space at the prominent intersection of Yates and Cook Streets provides an improved public realm presence and a gateway expression at this important corner. Residential lobbies are located on Yates Street and View Street.

Commercial space, totaling 3,324.4 m² (35,783.5 sf), is situated along Yates and Cook Streets, partitioned into small-to-medium commercial units and one large unit to allow for a range of shops and services. The building frames the surrounding streets and serves to anchor the eastern gateway to Harris Green. The redevelopment of the site, on what is now primarily an auto-oriented, large paved parking area and aging single-storey service building, will complete the built form for the block.

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The project information table below reflects the updated plans:

Project Information Table	
Zoning, Existing	R-48, S-1
Site Area	6,337 m ²
Total Floor Area	38,020.6m ²
Residential Floor Area	34,181.7m ²
Commercial Floor Area	3,324.4 m ²
Day Care	515 m ²
Floor Space Ratio	6.0:1
Site Coverage	83%
Open Site Space	12%
Max Building Height (tallest building)	66 m
Tower Heights	21 and 19
Parking Stalls (required: 418)	Up to 460
Bicycle Parking (short & long term) (required: 666)	Up to 680



Urban Design Expression

The design provides a perimeter block of building, which creates a pleasing street façade and features two slender towers. While simple in form, the towers are varied with balconies, which evoke a sense of movement and rhythm. Tower heights are stepped across the site, with the taller tower located on the west side and shorter tower sited toward Cook Street, and both are substantially setback from the street. There is a 23 m separation between the westerly tower face and the closest existing “Regent” tower to the west, and between the two “on- site” towers.

A signature interior courtyard provides a large outdoor amenity space for residents. This courtyard design remains unchanged. There are cascading podium levels that sculpt the building and optimize solar performance for the public realm, achieving a comfortable building scale. The corner plaza at the Yates/Cook Street intersection has been further enhanced to expand the public realm and will complement a similar plaza strategy planned by another development for the north side of the intersection.

The ground floor plan is predominantly commercial retail space on the Yates and Cook Street frontages. Architecturally, the exterior treatment has been changed to introduce a much stronger brick element along the frontages to break up the ground floor glazing and creates a storefront rhythm. There is a residential lobby on Yates Street and three additional purpose-use elevator lobbies — one from P1 (commercial/visitor parking) through to L2 (location of daycare), one from P1 to G (for retail customer access), and one from P3 through to G (a shuttle elevator for bikes). View Street has a residential lobby for podium and eastern tower residential units, a series of grade-oriented two-storey townhomes, and parking and loading access.

The continuous weather protection along retail frontages has been maintained and provides pedestrian comfort and opportunities for signage. Special feature canopies at main entrances provide a visual hierarchy and sense of arrival. Continuous retail, lobbies, and townhomes support ‘eyes on the street’, helping to promote security and wellbeing to the neighbourhood.

The notable “big move” design changes now incorporated include:

- Podium heights have been reduced from a 6 storey street wall, to a 4 storey street wall with the 5th floor setback 2.4 m (8 feet) from the street wall;
- Both towers have been increased by two stories in height to maintain floorspace removed through the reduction in the podium heights;
- Additional pronounced vertical breaks along the façade podium walls have been added to break up the massing along the Yates Street frontage.;
- Boulevard landscape and civil design has been changed to accommodate future cycling infrastructure. Sidewalks have been widened;
- Use of brick along the full frontage of all street walls. Stronger vertical brick elements are carried through from street level to the 4th floor podium. The 5th floor is setback and incorporates muted colours to blend into the horizon, and thus accentuating the brick elements of the 4-storey façade and,
- Changes in the colour palette of the towers and eliminating the rooftop overhang on the towers.

Landscaping & Rain Gardens

The landscape design proposes to prioritize green infrastructure. Rain gardens will be prominently featured on Yates Street and will function not only as a means of capturing and containing rainwater runoff from the sidewalk, but also as a neighbourhood amenity that enhances the public realm. An overall increase in the number of on-site and boulevard trees will further enhance the urban forest in the neighbourhood, as well as promote infiltration, offer water quality benefits, and reduce peak flow during storm events. The significant existing horse chestnut trees on Cook Street will be protected and retained to further support the urban forest.

Landscape plans have been updated to include revised planting materials, additional at-grade planting beds, relocated benches to provide edge for the planting beds, and changes to the boulevard height to allow for the future Yates Street bike lane.

Lush roof terrace plantings will provide inviting spaces for residents. Outdoor amenity space for residents includes an outdoor kitchen and dining area, enclosed dog park area, and informal play areas for children of all ages.

Project Benefits & Amenities

Project benefits & amenities remain unchanged and are briefly described below.

The childcare space is located on the second level of the Yates Street frontage, with a total interior area of 514.5 m² (5,538 sf), plus associated outdoor space. At maximum, the facility will accommodate approximately 75 children. A west-facing outdoor area includes a play area and outdoor tables and seating. A separate elevator accesses the childcare space, and also provides access to the ground level and P1 commercial and visitor parking.



Corner Plaza Space

Corner plaza space is provided at the prominent intersection of Cook and View Streets, and a smaller urban space expands the public realm at the southeast corner of the site. The ground level exterior walls are set back three meters from the street property lines. Incorporating “new town paving standards”, this design element that transitions into the public sidewalk will evoke a feeling of spacious, comfortable public spaces with ample room for street activities and outdoor restaurant seating.

Resident Amenities

An exhaustive complement of amenities is proposed for residents of the project, including:

- A substantial interior central internal courtyard on the second floor of the podium with pedestal paver floors and lush planters. Outside amenities within the courtyard include an outdoor kitchen with barbeques, benches, moveable tables and chairs, and an outdoor children’s play area. The courtyard will complement the surrounding interior amenities, and allow for flexible programming as tenants needs and preferences change over time;
- Interior amenities include a gym and fitness studio, change rooms, a multi-purpose/social room, and co- working and study spaces — all fronting onto the courtyard space; and,
- Three additional outdoor recreation spaces are found at various podium roof levels, including a dog run and additional outdoor seating.

Economic & Environmental Benefits

- More than five hundred (500) residential units will be added to the rental market, significantly expanding Victoria’s apartment rental inventory, and be a stabilizing influence on rental rates by providing much needed rental housing to market.
- Based on the Economic Policy Institute’s estimates for 2019 that state 5.5 direct jobs, 4.8 supplier jobs, and 6.1 induced jobs are created per \$1 million in construction value, it is estimated this project will generate approximately 260 construction and construction-related jobs per year during the construction period.
- The project will generate a sizable tax base, with direct tax revenues to the City estimated in the order of one million dollars annually.
- Residents occupying the 500+ residential units will significantly contribute to the vitality and financial health of Downtown retail shops and other local businesses.
- Living, working, and recreating Downtown reduces dependency on all forms of mechanized transportation, prompting positive economic and environmental benefits.

Transportation

The submitted plans provide a parking ratio that adheres to Schedule C requirements. Bicycle parking will meet bylaw requirements and will include designated space for cargo bikes. Separate bicycle storage and end of trip facilities have also been provided for commercial tenant employees.

Parking is located entirely below-grade. Service access for commercial units, garbage, and recycling is located at street level, but within the building envelope and enclosed from exterior view.

Access to the parking and services areas will be from View Street. Changes in design now provide for a buffer area between the entrance leading to underground parking and the entrance leading to the



service area and will create a safer pedestrian experience. Additional changes include relocation of a dedicated bike elevator leading from the ground floor to the underground levels with a separate corridor to exit onto Cook Street. The separate exterior access to the elevator will give residents convenient access to bike storage.

Although parking requirements are anticipated to meet or exceed Schedule C, a series of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures will be implemented to encourage alternate transportation choices to private vehicle use. Starlight will work with City staff to determine appropriate TDM measures given the location of the development and its proximity to transit.

The following TDM measures are:

- Three MODO (carshare) cars stationed on site;
- Three public EV stations in the commercial/visitor parking;
- EV load share will be provided in the residential parking to support up to 90 stalls;
- Bicycle parking in the basement is provided with an elevator sized to allow easy access to the street;
- Bicycle lockers are provided with a room for larger cargo-style bikes to encourage healthy active lifestyles and reduced car usage;
- End-of-trip bike facilities is provided to encourage employees to use active transportation to and from home and their places of business; and
- Multi-modal wayfinding signage to help direct and orient residents, employees, and visitors to transit, bike share, car share, and bicycle parking and amenities.



Environmental Features

Environmental features have not changed since the original DP submission, and are reiterated below for convenience:

- As a mixed-use, transit-oriented project, the development will provide a local option for housing, shopping, and leisure, and a childcare facility to support the growing community;
- The urban infill nature of the project adheres to the principle of promoting development on existing urban sites, diverting development pressure from greenfield locations, and making more efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- The project supports a high degree of walkability and cycling access to nearby amenities for residents, thereby reducing vehicle trips;
- Car share and load sharing EV stations are provided to reduce CO2 emissions;
- Extensive bike parking, lockers, and a bike repair station are provided;
- Landscape and stormwater management strategies, including partial green roofs, will retain and infiltrate rainwater, limiting the post-development peak water run-off from the development.

In order to reduce the urban heat island effect, improve building performance, and reduce CO2 emissions, the project design is implementing the following measures:

- All parking is underground;
- The project will provide roof-top terraces with community gardens and garden beds to provide the opportunity for residents to engage in urban agriculture;
- A mix of unit types for various styles of living will have access to balconies and/or to large terraces on roof decks to provide all with access to the outdoors and views;
- Large windows in living room areas will increase natural lighting, provide views, and improve wellbeing;
- Outdoor water conservation strategies include water efficient landscaping. The project will aim to achieve an overall reduction in water use by specifying efficient fixtures;
- The building will have wildlife-resistant recyclable material storage facilities that are accessible to all users of the property;
- Ventilation supply and distribution will be designed to satisfy the requirements of ASHRAE standards, and will include ensuring ventilation is supplied to each suite and adequately distributed to each occupied space;
- The project will target BC Energy Step Code 3. Passive envelope strategies have been implemented to reduce reliance on mechanical systems. Glazing percentage targets 50% window-to-wall area for the towers to minimize glazing heat loss and heat gain into each unit;
- Glazing specifications on the different building orientations will be considered for maximized solar control and passive heating; solar heat gain coefficient (SHGC) variations can benefit both energy and comfort. Glazing with projected balconies can have a higher SHGC for passive heating benefits during winter months, while shaded during summer months. Benefits will be based on completed energy modeling;
- Significant daylight penetration into each residential suite will increase passive solar gain during winter months, reduce reliance on artificial lighting, and provide access to views;
- Continuous weather protection along the commercial unit frontages will serve as combined solar control to reduce summertime heat gain and mitigate glare issues in locations where buildings are not self-shading. The project has reduced exposed slab edges by providing insulated panels across the majority of the envelope;
- Almost all units have access to an outdoor balcony, providing passive natural ventilation and cooling during shoulder months; and
- Low-energy lighting systems, including motion sensors, will be employed in all common areas throughout the project. ENERGY STAR appliances will be used throughout the project.



In Closing

This project is the first of a three-phased comprehensive redevelopment plan that will materially fulfill the long-term vision and policy objectives of the Harris Green Neighbourhood and the *Downtown Core Area Plan*. This prominent gateway site demands a signature development that bookends the eastern edge of the Downtown area. Since the June submission the massing, materials and colour palette has

been revised with particular attention being paid to the appearance of all facades and through the selection of high-quality materials that are reflective of the Victoria vernacular. Combining the materiality of the revised architectural elements of the street wall and its slender sculpted towers we believe this project will become a feature landmark, and a positive contributor to the urban fabric of Victoria.

Should you require any further information about this application, please do not hesitate to contact me at 250.383.0304 x 122 or dstrongitharm@cityspaces.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deane Strongitharm". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Deane Strongitharm, RPP, MCIP

Attachs.

cc. Starlight Developments

