

August 12, 2019

Mayor & Council
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

Dear Mayor and Council:

CALUC Community Meeting for Rezoning Application for 43, 45, 55 Gorge Road East and 2827, 2831 Irma Street

On August 12, 2019, the Burnside Gorge Land Use Committee (BGLUC) hosted a CALUC community meeting that was advertised to discuss a proposal to rezone 43-55 Gorge Road East & 2827-2831 Irma Street from the current R-1B Single Family Dwelling to Multi Family Residential

Chris Karu, Robert Cadiz, and Brian Kozak of PC Urban, and representatives of Wensley Architecture Ltd. jointly presented.

The proposal is for a 163 unit residential rental building of 5 storeys, with a approximate 7 meter southern portion reduced to 4 storeys. Units currently consist of 5 three bedroom, 62 two bedroom, 76 one bedroom, and 21 studio. A ground floor commercial space of 467 square feet (possible coffee shop) is proposed. Parking proposed is one level of underground parking for 125 vehicles and 102 bicycle stalls.

The proposal requires variances for the following:

- 125 Parking stalls proposed as compared to the required 159
- FSR of 2.39 proposed as compared to the allowed 1.2 or maximum 2.0 with community amenities.
- Building height is above the 3 storey or 4 story with community amenity allowed.

Comments and questions from the 38 attendees focused on the following:

- Repeated comments by a majority of residents on the critical lack of onsite parking including lack of sufficient visitor parking.

Response that options of supported transit passes, MODO car share, etc. would be considered.

A comment by a resident that revising the proposed site plan to allow possible access to the underused parking area at the Gorge Hospital site should be considered.

- Repeated vocal comments objecting to the size and massing of the proposed building. Requests to step back upper floors, reduce the height of the building, and to open the courtyard space to the public. The public's proposals for having public access to the courtyard suggested either providing a walkway access from Irma Street or reversing the building to have an open courtyard on Irma.
- Numerous comments that the entire ground floor should be a commercial space as a community amenity. Comments that a small coffee shop is not what the Neighbourhood Plan intended as an Urban Village concept and does not warrant the extra density.

Response is that a full ground floor commercial space makes the proposal financially unsupportable.

- Question. Will the building be rental in perpetuity.

Response was Yes, as this would be secured with a covenant.

- Comment that this does not take the heritage value of Irma & Lotus Streets into account nor respect the neighbouring houses.
- Comments objecting to the increase of traffic on Irma Street.
- Question: Why are there not more 2 and 3 bedroom units which are desired by community.

Response was that larger units would affect the affordability concept of the project.

Vote: As per the process of a BGCA rezoning community meeting, there was a straw poll held. There were 4 votes in favour, 30 votes opposed, and 4 abstentions. The LUC also received 3 emails from residents unable to attend, all opposed to this proposal based on the grounds noted above.

Respectfully,



Avery Stetski
Land Use Committee Chair
Burnside Gorge Community Association

cc: Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department
Chris Karu, PC Urban, Colin Harper, Wensley Architecture Ltd.