

Fairfield Gonzales Community Association

Proposed Abstract Development at 1101 Fort Street. Victoria, BC

Attn: Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
Centennial Square, Victoria BC

December 23, 2011

Re: Community meeting for the proposed development of 1101 Fort Street

As duly advertized, a community meeting was chaired by the FGCA Planning and Zoning Committee at the FGCA premises on December 19 , 2011 in connection with the above mentioned proposed project. Approximately 27 individuals from the community were present and the following are comments that were made at the meeting.

- Following introductions by the Chair of the FGCA Planning and Zoning Committee at 7:00, Mr. Mike Miller, the President of Abstract Developments, stated that his company purchased the property approximately 1 year ago and shortly after completing some necessary repairs of the existing facility, he began working with staff from the City of Victoria about his plans for the site.
- Mr. Miller stated that his proposed plans for the site fit in well with the recently completed downtown plan and that if all goes according to plan, he will commence construction in 2014.
- The project architect went on to state that the existing proposal calls for 86 suites in a mixed use development. The first floor being commercial use with the other 5 stories being residential. According to the current plan, the residential suites will range in size from approximately 550 to 850 square feet.
- The existing facility has an FSR of .75 and the existing zoning allows an FSR of 2.5. The proposed zoning is calling for an FSR of 3.9 and the current zoning allows for a 4 story structure while the current proposal is proposed to be a 6 story structure.
- The project landscape architect went on to state how the proposed design was laid out including the utilization of rain planters, interlocking pavers, planted public areas etc.

- Once the developer and his team had completed their presentations, there were a number of comments from the neighbours.
- Without going into detail, the conversation went as follows.
- Generally speaking, there was an appreciation of the fact that the developer was coming to speak to them at this stage of the project. A few individuals stated that they appreciate the opportunity to voice their concerns at this stage in the process.
- The two issues of primary concern were parking and building height.
- From the perspective of parking, there was quite a bit of concern that Mears street would become much more crowded than it currently is if there wasn't one parking stall provided per unit. There was some concern expressed in regard to allowing parking access from Mears street at all and that a Fort street parking access would be more suitable. This concern was expressed by a few individuals because Mears is such a narrow street in comparison to Fort Street.
- From the perspective of building height, the primary concerns were raised by the residents of the Zen building (directly adjacent to the proposed development). The concerns were that the proposed design was much taller than surrounding buildings and because of the size of it, congestion would be greater and that the proposed design will block existing breezeway halls in the Zen building. The potential choice of rooftop plantings was also raised as a concern.
- There were also some comments made regarding whether the building would actually be occupied by owners or if it would become an investment/ rental building. Some of those present were not in agreement to that because they felt that there was an existing and thriving local retail environment and that if the building is allowed to be built in accordance with it's current design, it would not result in more foot traffic as Abstract hopes it will however, it will result in more car traffic.
- There were also a couple of comments related to the safety and security of residents if the proposed design was allowed to go forward. The concern was primarily about the potential for street people to occupy the portions of the site at night time.
- The developer stated that state of the art lighting would be installed which would in turn impede that potential threat.
- The meeting ended at approximately 8:30 and a number of individuals spoke privately with the developer after that so I imagine that a few of them wanted to express their concerns directly to the developer rather than in the meeting.

Michael Masson

Chair FGCA Planning and Zoning Committee.