

**Public hearing for rezoning of 3471 Chatham Street
July 21, 2014**

Over the past year we have appreciated the opportunity to express our concerns about the proposed development for 3471 Chatham Street. Voicing our thoughts about a proposal that so greatly impacts our life and the enjoyment of our property is important and we sincerely hope that Council will truly listen and seriously consider our opinion.

In our February 17, 2014 letter to the Planning Department, we outlined how the new building contravened several existing design criteria and guidelines established by the city. Citing specific sections of the Steveston Conservation Guidelines, the city's building code, and the Steveston Area Plan including the Sakamoto Guidelines, all of which we read in great detail, we noted how it was too large for the site – the scale and character being incompatible with surrounding homes. How it was not complimentary to the block of entirely single family homes. How it did not reflect Steveston's architectural history. How it did not "transition" into the neighbourhood. How the height would create shadow, and how it would significantly impact the privacy of adjacent yards.

While Planning Department staff agreed that in almost all instances the proposal did not fit the guidelines, they were quite prepared to make exceptions, especially since the developers were equally prepared to put money in the city coffers, so they recommended acceptance of the plan.

To give credit where credit is due, the developers did make some revisions that improved the look of the building but they did nothing at all to substantially alter its size which is still the main source of our concern. Just because you CAN build a monstrosously large building doesn't mean you SHOULD. Developers buy density because it is advantageous to them, not to the surrounding neighbours. In this case, Council seems prepared to sell out our neighbourhood for \$296,476 which I suspect is considerably less than the anticipated real estate price for only one of the ten proposed residential units. The only one that benefits here is the developer.

In trying to minimize the extensive shadowing effect of the proposed building, the developers have made claims that our trees already shade our house so their building will not make any difference. I'm not going to deny the existence of our trees or that they shade the house, but what the developers conveniently neglect to say is that two of the trees are deciduous so have no leaf cover all winter, thus create no shadow, and, more importantly, that there is a 40 foot gap between the trees which allows the morning sun into our yard. It is that very gap which this building will fill thus putting one third of our yard in shadow every morning. And that, according to the sun shading diagrams provided by the developers, is in the summer months when the sun is high. It will be even worse during the winter months when the sun is lower.

Councillor Halsey-Brandt, in her justification for voting in favour of rooftop patios, spoke fervently of everyone's right to enjoy sunshine and outdoor living. Sadly, it is ironic that those very amenities which you seem so eager to provide to the residents of this new building are exactly the ones that you deem fit to take away from us. While they will enjoy unlimited sunshine every day all year long on their private patio, we will have a back yard that will be unpleasantly dark and damp for a considerable part of the year because of the proposed building's shadow. I see no fairness there at all. What I do see is a Council willing to bow to the wishes of a developer rather than seriously consider the requests of a long-time resident.

Councillor Steves has publicly apologized for having let rooftop patio space slip into Steveston. Unfortunately his words ring disappointingly hollow and his apologies are absolutely meaningless if he, and you, keep voting to allow developers to continue doing the same thing. Rooftop patios should not become the norm in Steveston.

This is not, as the developer accuses, a case of NIMBY-ism. We have never said, nor would we ever say, that the owners do not have a right to build on their property. They do. We have had a building next door for 36 of the 39 years we have lived here and we fully expect a building to be there for the foreseeable future.

Neither are we questioning the quality of any construction. Making all units fully accessible is commendable but it doesn't change the fact that the proposed building is just too big. The equation is simple - make the building smaller and, voila, you might even have room at ground level for that priceless outdoor amenity space you all seem so keenly committed to providing to the residents of the new building.

This Council has the power and the responsibility and, I hope, the courage to make sure that whatever is built at 3471 Chatham Street is the right building - the one most appropriate for the neighbourhood. The one that is the least intrusive and makes the least negative impact on the neighbourhood.

Reject the rooftop patio, deny the request for the unnecessary height increase, refuse the application for increased density, and require the developer to construct a building that falls within already existing design guidelines and by-laws. It's not difficult. Just say no to this proposal as currently presented.

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