



April 27, 2021

Township of Esquimalt  
1229 Esquimalt Road  
Esquimalt, BC  
V9A 3P1

**Re: 530/534/538 West Bay Terrace and 877/879 Dunsmuir Rd Rezoning Application**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing regarding Wexford Developments rezoning application for 530/534/538 West Bay Terrace and 877/879 Dunsmuir Rd. We first submitted our rezoning application in December of 2020. Following staff review, we were informed of a number of items they wanted us to review to try to achieve a slimmer building with more robust landscaping and a smaller parkade to allow for more permeable soils for large trees to grow and for storm water management. We worked closely with Alex Tang and Bill Brown through a series of iterative workshop meetings to test different scenarios of building massing, shaping and unit mix and layout. We have now revised our original design and present a revised submission that addresses all of the items raised by staff. This collaborative effort has resulted in a balanced response to staff comments, and a much improved design that I hope will please staff, council, and residents.

Wexford Developments is an experienced seven-person real estate investment, development, and management company. When we founded Wexford seven years ago, my business partner and I were determined to strengthen communities by building sustainable, irreplaceable, inner-city residential rental buildings in walkable, transit-oriented, bike-friendly neighbourhoods. For us, this is personal. Our entire team has young children who keep us inspired and committed to doing work that is good for the environment, that makes our families proud, and ultimately stands the test of time. Wexford strives to become members of the communities we build in and are excited to be one of the lead sponsors for the 2021 Esquimalt Farmers Market.

Growing up in a suburban subdivision in Saskatchewan that required a car to get anywhere, I saw firsthand the impacts sprawl has on a family's lifestyle, on climate and the environment, and on cities themselves. These early experiences shaped my passion for densification, sustainable growth in walkable neighbourhoods and, at the end of the day, building units that our tenants are proud to call home.

Which brings me to this location. We believe this project warrants consideration for rezoning with a variance request. Our original rezoning proposal included 125 units. The design revisions made as a result of our workshop meetings with planning led to a reduction of 15 units and our revised proposal now consists of 110 residential rental units with a mix of studio, 1, 2, and 3-bedroom units. We have also increased the overall number of 3 bedroom units from our original proposal and the majority of them are now

located on the main floor with walk up entrances designed to attract families. Designed by local firm dHKarchitects, this unique building will feature six storeys of residential space including a large roof-top amenity space on the same sixth storey. Every unit above the second level will have a balcony with unobstructed ocean views – a luxury normally reserved for Esquimalt residents living in million-dollar condos or multi-million dollar homes. The top floor features a rooftop patio that will serve as gathering space for residents and community members in a post-COVID world, where neighbours can host events and see friends flanked by views of the water. Yoga areas, tenant co-working tables, fire tables and gathering spaces will all be incorporated on the rooftop patio, encouraging neighbour socializing while overlooking the ocean. We anticipate these rental units will appeal to a diverse range of tenants including young professionals who will be able to bike or take transit to work, retirees looking to downsize to a walkable neighbourhood, and families who prize access to inner-city amenities. Furthermore, we have employed an entirely local team in building this site, including the architect, consultants, general contractor and tradespersons such as electricians and landscapers.

We love that the four walls we build become such a central piece of our tenants' life stories; our tenants have become engaged, had babies (yes, sometimes even in our units), and are raising their families in our buildings. Given that we manage and operate our developments, thus establishing long-standing relationships in the neighbourhoods we build in, we've always been committed to extensive community engagement. From Day 1, we have endeavored to proactively include the West Bay Residents Association to ensure our design best reflects the desires of the community. Before beginning design work, we met with the Residents Association for a frank conversation about the site and their hopes for re-development. We have continued to engage residents throughout the design process and worked hard to incorporate their thoughts into our design. To date, we've held more than 20 community meetings and conversations with councilors and staff to gather feedback and make revisions to our plan, including a follow up meeting with the West Bay Residents Association on April 5, 2021, sharing our revised design.

We've heard again and again from you, from the Residents Association, and from potential tenants themselves about how important sustainability is when it comes to re-development in Esquimalt. As mentioned, this is a core value at our company and it's a key reason why we want to re-develop this severely under-utilized site.

We have closely adhered to the Official Community Plan (OCP) for Esquimalt and the West Bay Neighbourhood Design Guidelines in our design process. This is reflected in everything from the private balconies on every rental unit and shared rooftop patio, which maintain strong connections to the harbourfront and enhance and celebrate the unique marine ecology, to the at-grade landscaped street-level entries, clear paths, and secure main-floor bike parking room, which encourage alternative modes of transportation, walkability and neighborliness.

At six-storeys of residential, with a rooftop amenity space, the proposed building is within, and actually slightly below, the allowable height in the OCP. While we have

worked hard to meet all guidelines, the one area where we are asking for a relaxation is on parking – with our design proposing a .8 parking stall to unit ratio, a variance which is supported by a parking study and engineer’s report. Parking will be administered by the building’s management, ensuring parking assignments are appropriately handled for tenants creating a smooth experience. In addition, we will be building electric vehicle charging capabilities into every parking stall.

Given 530 West Bay Terrace’s proximity to bike paths, walkways, and transit, we feel less parking is the sustainable choice to make this a building for the future. In addition, we’ve found naturally occurring arsenic in the soil on the site, which makes digging a parkade any further than one level deep dangerous, unsustainable and environmentally unfriendly, as the soil would need to be excavated, trucked to a barge, shipped to the mainland and disposed of at a special facility. This arsenic is 100% safe if undisturbed, however if we disturb the soil, special disposal is required. Frankly, this is fundamentally against our sustainability beliefs, and this feels counterintuitive for a building that will exist long into the future as vehicle ownership declines, alternative modes of transportation are only further embraced, and the environment becomes an even more pressing issue. Residents will have access to 110 bike parking stalls and a dedicated main-floor bike room with amenities including a bike repair area and charging outlets for electric bikes. We have also included a list of proposed Transportation Demand Strategies (TDMs) to show how we plan to attract and accommodate tenants who wish to have a car-free lifestyle.

Our proposed landscaping plan will better the public realm with site improvements including the replacement of any impacted existing trees, and the provision of additional trees and planting to the appropriate ratio according to Esquimalt's landscaping requirements. Other landscaping improvements will include the development of a new boulevard and sidewalk on West Bay Terrace and boulevard improvements to Dunsmuir Road, including a small plaza for gathering. We believe our designs are future-focused and meet the demands we’ve heard for a sustainable development in this treasured location.

We want to acknowledge that any new development at 530 West Bay Terrace will displace 20 existing tenants, and we will strive to do everything we can to ensure as smooth of a transition as possible. We are committed to exceeding the existing tenant rental laws in B.C. when it comes to months-notice and compensation and will also go above and beyond to help these tenants find a new place to call home by partnering with local support agencies. A draft of our tenant relocation plan has also been submitted for your review. This package includes over \$100,000 of financial and staff support for existing tenants, which is five times the minimum compensation value required.

Finally, we want to reiterate that we have chosen to build in Esquimalt as we share your commitment to leading the way in sustainability, creating walkable neighbourhoods, and maintaining Esquimalt’s small-town community feel.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. I respectfully ask for your support in making this project a reality. Please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Kendal Harazny  
Principal and Co-founder, Wexford Developments LP