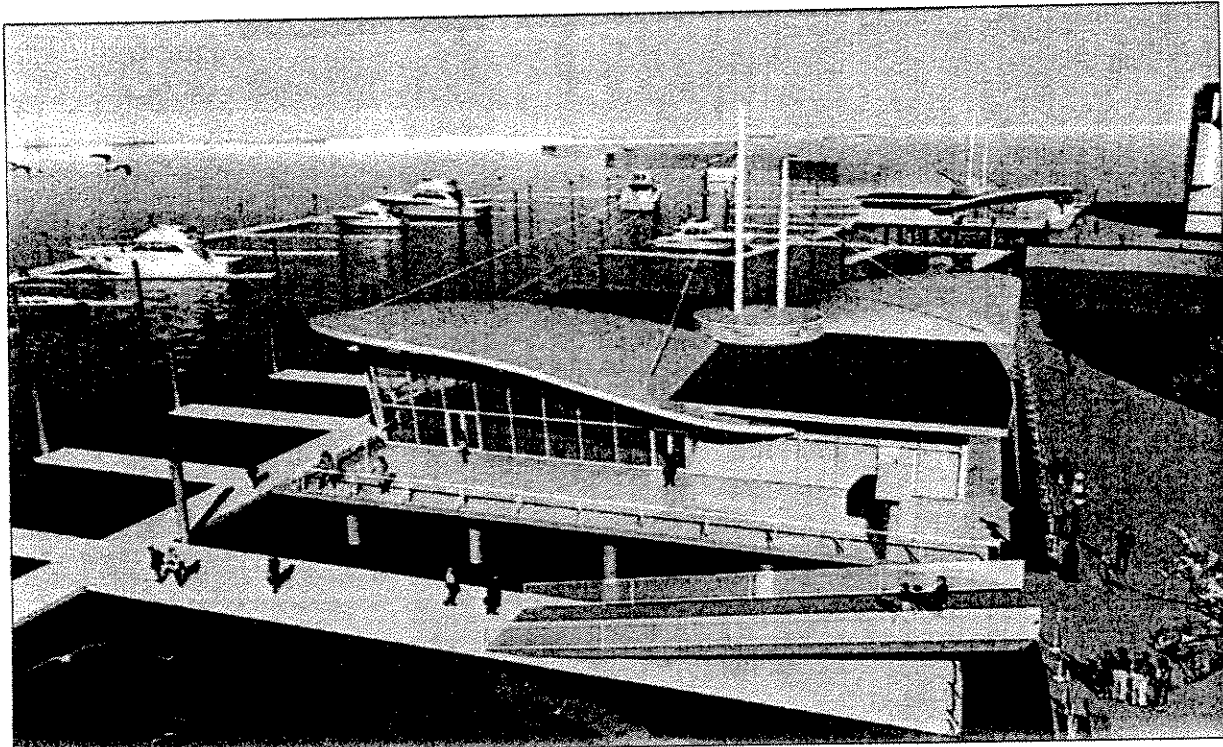


TC May 8, 2008



Victoria marina at Songhees will be a slip for mega-yachts and the focal point of a new waterfront community.

Proposed mega-yacht marina scheduled for Victoria in 2009

BY CARLA WILSON

A proposed marina targeting mega-yachts would be bound to lure these vessels to B.C.'s capital, say owners of a Seattle company specializing in luxury boats.

"In Victoria, if you had a place, they would come," said Randy Cowley, who owns Venwest Yachts Inc. with his wife Maureen.

It's not unusual for yacht owners to have multiple slips reserved from Mexico to Canada, he said on Wednesday.

The planned \$20-million, 48-berth marina at Songhees would serve the growing market for huge yachts, which are about 65 to 140 feet long, said developer Bob Evans. He is partnering with Alberta-based Western Asset Management Development Group to form Community Marine Concepts LP.

Evans said this would be Canada's only

marina dedicated exclusively to mega-yachts. Plans call for the marina to be open this time next year.

"Everyone loves Victoria, and [a marina] would probably bring a lot more people in," said Maureen Cowley.

Ship Point can accommodate large yachts, but it takes transient vessels for short periods only, said Paul Servos, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority CEO. "[Evans] is looking at a regular marina."

"We think it would be complimentary to our business. We don't have any issues with it. ... We are in the business of promoting harbour activity," Servos said.

Plans for a marina are part of the 1987 Songhees master agreement between the city of Victoria and province, which led to industrial land being converted into the residential and commercial development standing today.

Each slip would have a sanitary waste removal system, and yachts would use the

fuelling station at Fisherman's Wharf, Evans said. Electric golf carts would run along the wide floating concrete breakwater to serve the yachts. A bridge would allow small craft, such as kayaks, near shore.

"The key thing is, it adds interest and activity of a very high-quality nature," Evans said.

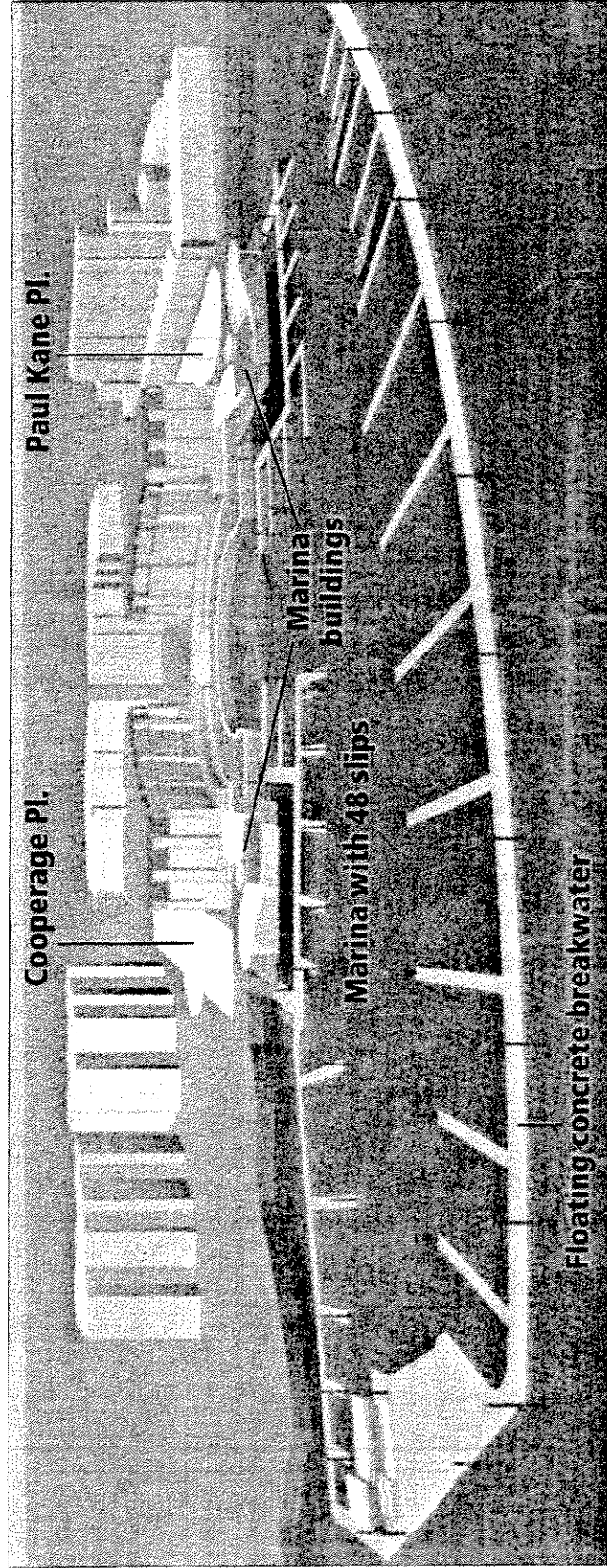
Marine submitted a development permit application to the city of Victoria last week for approval to build two buildings on pilings at Songhees. These applications normally take about eight weeks to come before council, although some take longer.

The firm already owns the two water lots where marina buildings such as offices, a restaurant, coffee shop and interpretive centre would be located. In 1993, those lots were downzoned to one-storey commercial use by the city.

Canwest News Service

Marina plan for harbour floated

Wednesday, May 7, 2008



FORAN/STUDIO 8 ARCHITECTURE

Canadian killed on patrol in Afghanistan

A Canadian soldier was killed and another injured Friday in Afghanistan when an ...

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Seabed tests begin for Songhees yacht marina

Steel pilings will be driven to help prepare the final design

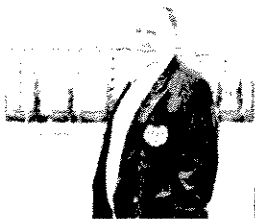
Carla Wilson, Times Colonist

Published: Wednesday, June 11, 2008

Heavy-duty equipment is expected to start driving the first steel test pilings into the seabed at 8 a.m. today for a proposed mega-yacht marina at Songhees in Victoria harbour.

A vibrating unit will drive 12 pilings into the 6.5-acre site in a testing process needed to develop a \$20-million marina, said Victoria developer Bob Evans, who is partnering with Western Asset Management Development Group of Alberta, to form Community Marine Concepts LP.

Machinery will drive pilings down to find out where each one meets resistance, Evans said.



[View Larger Image](#)

Developer Bob Evans stands across from the Songhees site where the proposed mega-yacht marina is expected to be built.

Darren Stone, Times Colonist

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BOOKMARK

"The resistance is hard mud or rock and that tells us how deep they have to go." This information is needed to prepare the final design for the marina.

Hopefully, the test piling work will be finished by the end of this week but could take four days, he said. Soil samples are being gathered for analysis.

Evans has received needed provincial and federal approvals to carry out the test piling work. Further approvals would be needed for his project in Victoria's busy harbour, where public and private docks have been in place for decades, float planes land and take off, and kayakers and large and small ferries share the waters.

Community Marine Concepts is aiming to build Canada's only marina targeting mega-yachts. It can be difficult for owners of these luxury vessels to find moorage space because marinas are mainly built to accommodate smaller boats. Most yachts mooring in the planned 48-berth marina would be about 20 to 43 metres long, Evans said.

Locally, Ship Point can take large yachts, but only for a short time.

Evans said the marina would be a boon to the local economy. The site was downzoned by the city previously and current zoning allows for the planned project. A development permit from the city of Victoria, plus provincial and federal permission is required.

The proposal is controversial. Opponents don't want views altered by a marina in front of Songhees and some say patrons of the marina and its restaurant would be noisy.

Fuel use by these large vessels at a time when Canada is trying to reduce its environmental footprint is another issue for project critics. They also worry that the marina will drive away local wildlife, that boats and the restaurant will emit odours, and say the site is too windy.

A floating concrete breakwater, used to muffle waves, would reduce waves substantially, Evans said.

Studies showed that the wave pattern was less than expected, Evans said, adding the site is less windy than some other established marinas in the region. Permanent pilings would be concrete.

About 3.5 acres would need to be dredged by 1.5-two metres to make the site deep enough, he said. The seabed is "primarily old bark chips and mud."

Environmental testing showed that this area is less contaminated than on the other side of the harbour where munitions and paint factories once existed, Evans said. The marina area served as a city garbage dump and a barge-loading site. "It is very clean compared to what was expected."

If the marina goes ahead, it would be open by late spring or early summer of next year, he said.

Work in the water would be scheduled so that it would not interfere with any fish spawning.

There would be twin marina buildings that would take about eight months to build and the marina about three months.

Much of the work would be done elsewhere with components assembled at the site, he said.

cjwilson@tc.canwest.com

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COMMENTS ON THIS STORY

[Add Your Comment](#)

Dave

Wed, Jun 11, 08 at 12:21 PM

I find this entire proposal bizarre at the least, but the idea of attracting 'mega-yachts' to the inner harbour really borders on total insanity. Especially when you consider these yachts consume between 500 and 900 litres of fuel per hour. One of the wonders of Victoria is the Westsong walkway, mainly because it is open to all and has unobstructed views all the way from the Johnson Street bridge to the West Bay marina in Esquimalt. Destroying one of the best parts of the walkway for the use of the 'mega-rich' is unacceptable. There has to be some limit to what developers can get away with, and this is one project Victoria can do without. Dave from Esquimalt

Steve

Wed, Jun 11, 08 at 01:26 PM

Where are they planning to dump the seabed they are dredging? Who is going to ensure the seabed is not actually contaminated? What affect will disturbing the seabed have on the present recovery of the harbour?

Eric

Wed, Jun 11, 08 at 01:46 PM

This project needs to be stopped, I cannot think of anything worse for our harbour and our city.

graham t

Wed, Jun 11, 08 at 03:52 PM

I would question the economic benefit these mega-yachts would bring vs. building for 'normal' sized boats. Also, they should have to turn off all diesel engines when docked and use shore-based power.

Erik

Wed, Jun 11, 08 at 06:15 PM

Stop Bob Evans.

Dave

Thu, Jun 12, 08 at 12:16 AM

Who is this benefiting? Or more like who is this hurting?

Walter

Thu, Jun 12, 08 at 03:52 PM

It is obvious what is happening here. Unless Victorians become more engaged in decisions made at the political level that will affect what path the city's future will follow, special self serving interest groups will do as they please.

only 8/08

DEVELOPMENT

Luxury marina plans to be ready by fall

Seabed tests during the past month provided information for the design

CARLA WILSON
Times Colonist

Final plans for a floating pier that would also diminish waves should be ready late this fall, said the proponent of a proposed \$20-million luxury marina in Victoria's harbour.

Information needed for the design was gathered in last month's testing of the seabed in the waters in front of the

Songhees neighbourhood.

A total of 14 locations were tested, said Bob Evans, who is partnering with Alberta's Western Asset Management Development Group to form Community Marine Concepts LP.

Their plan is to put up two buildings on water lots they already own and to create a 48-berth marina to serve megayachts. The buildings would be constructed on pilings in the

water lot, already zoned for that use.

The developers need to lease a water lot from the province for the marina and also receive provincial and federal approvals.

A development permit is required from the city of Victoria before the buildings can go up. Required reports with building details are going to the city shortly, Evans said yesterday.

The proposal has opponents who don't want to see another marina in the busy harbour, where power boats, large and small ferries, kayaks, and air-

craft come and go. Concerns include noise from yacht owners and visitors and from a planned restaurant in one of the buildings. Some say it will hurt their views from the waterfront walkway and nearby condos, and they don't like the idea of yachts using large amounts of fuel parking in Victoria.

In the June tests, a contractor using a barge drove steel piles into the water to discover the point of "refusal" where they hit rock or hardpan. Depths were one to three metres deeper than expected,

ranging from about nine metres to 25 metres, Evans said. An archeologist present for the testing did not find any First Nations artifacts.

Old industrial wood waste covers the seabed, where there is blue clay over bedrock, Evans said.

Soil tests for pollution are expected to be finished in about a week, he said.

The plan is to start construction early next year and likely open by the end of next summer. "We definitely want to be open for 2010," he said.

cwilson@tc.ca/west.com

Victoria sets sights on luring mega-yachts

Business in Vancouver

VICTORIA - More feet, more revenue. That's basically the equation when it comes to mega-yachts. According to the International Super Yacht Association, last year, each mega-yacht, spends an average of \$2.5 million per year on operations, and \$5 Million if it's a charter boat.

Recognizing that economic potential, Community Marine Concepts Ltd. of Victoria, owned by WAM Development Group of Edmonton, are developing a new high-end marina in Victoria that will be the first in Canada to cater specifically to these boats.

Mega-yachts vary when it comes to definition. Some consider length (more than 100

feet), displacement or cost. It could also be defined by high standards of design and construction, craftsmanship or ornamentation. In general, a yacht more than 80 feet long would fit into that category.

The Victoria International Marina will comprise 48 slips around the Songhees waterfront, right at the entrance to the harbour, and will be capable of mooring yachts 70- to 135-feet long.

Robert Evans, vice-president of Community Marine, said testing is set to begin over the next couple of months, with plans to open in a year.

"It's a huge industry," said Evans. "Last year there were 770 super-yachts under construction."

"Yacht transportation com-

panies are doubling their efforts to bring vessels up to British Columbia. There are few marinas along coast that are of scale and technical nature required by these yachts."

"We're first marina in Canada built for these yachts," said Evans. "Slips have to be built a certain way, and they require specific services. For example, traffic on the floats will be by golf carts. Also, 60%-70% are charter boats with guests on board from the country of origin and business guests from around the world. The professional crews will require special services."

In addition to the marina, Evans' plans call for 16,000 square feet of retail/commercial, including a public restaurant, lounge and coffee house,

marine provisions supplier and a concierge marine management centre.

In the early 1980s, the B.C. government, along with the City of Victoria, had come to an agreement to develop the area in Songhees for housing, parks and marine recreation. The two governments created guidance for building designs that included housing, hotels and a marina.

In 1986, Evans, then president of Pacific National Investments Ltd., agreed to buy and develop the 16 acres of the property, which consisted of coal and rail yards, a garbage dump, a barge landing and a sludge mill.

The agreement was for to restore the environment and build parks, streets and a waterfront

walkway on 60% of the land, which was then to be donated to the city. The remaining 40% was designated for six building sites, three of which would be used a world class marina.

"As Victoria's No. 1 industry, tourism is constantly in a state of refinement and expansion," said Bruce Carter, CEO of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, regarding the marina proposal. "Expanding on our capacity to accept large yachts is one way of attracting a segment of the tourism market that is not currently being adequately addressed, and to keep our tourism product fresh and competitive. The economic development opportunities and community benefit are significant."

The threat to our waterfront

Graham Taylor

The unique attraction of Victoria lies in its Inner Harbor, an idyllic composite of sparkling water, boats of every description, waterfront walks, open space and low-scale historic buildings. What greater heresy could be committed than to propose a high-density development overlooking Victoria's Inner Harbor.

The area slated for this development is referred to as the Songhees, an 84-acre parcel that was formerly an Indian reserve. The Songhees is bounded by the Johnson Street Bridge to the east, Victoria West Park to the west, and extends from the tank farms to Bamfield Park. This land is partly under the control of CP and CN Rail, some is owned by the city but the major holdings are provincial. Certain parcels are still leased to private industry, with the final lease expiring in about five years.

Given its prime location, commanding views and the dramatic influence it will have on the character of the Inner Harbor, the Songhees demands perceptive, sensitive and inspired planning in its redevelopment. The current status of this vitally important planning process can be summarized by addressing the chronological stages in planning commencing in January of this year.

The provincial government commissioned architect Arthur Erickson to undertake a study for both a medium density and high-density development of the Songhees. Erickson's Theme Study was released to the public in February and there was a hostile reaction to both its medium and high-density proposals, prompting Victoria city council to suggest an alternative approach.

City council requested and received \$150,000 for the creation of a city plan for the Songhees that would be more attuned to the citizens' wishes. The city's planning started in earnest in May and will be complete by the end of this month.

To city council's credit, it recognized the necessity for public input in the planning process, resulting in the appointment of a Citizens' Advisory Committee. This committee, together with the Professional Advisory Committee, has offered constructive criticism and suggestions to the design consortium, a local architectural firm that has been charged with the responsibility of drawing up the city's plan. The final plan will be presented at a City Hall hearing at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 28.

If the city's planning process incorporating public input has performed satisfactorily, why is the Songhees development being threatened with transformation into a mini B.C. Place? The situation arises from an overlapping of the rejected Erickson study and the emerging city plan. Eager to commence development of the Songhees, the provincial government began implementing the first phase of the Erickson study before the study was made public. Land was rezoned, detailed architectural plans were completed, and sponsors found for the first two projects, an 11-storey high-rise and a 76-unit townhouse complex.

All these steps were taken before the public was given an opportunity to view the overall provincial plan. The provincial government is intent upon proceeding with construction of the high-rise and townhouse complex before the city plan is complete.

If the first phase of the Erickson Study is implemented despite public and professional opinion, will the remaining phases of the suggested Erickson development be implemented in a disguised form?

Most disturbingly, there is no evidence of the provincial government's willingness to heed widespread opposition to its plans. Public opinion expressed at the public workshop on July 20 and the "open house" held Aug. 25-27 was adamantly against the building of the 11-storey high-rise.

The design consortium, professional advisory committee and members of the citizens' advisory committee have all expressed unqualified opposition to the construction of the high-rise and townhouse complex before the city plan is completed and approved.

Curiously most city council members have not supported their appointed planners but seem to have given their blessing to the provincial government's intrusion.

An attempt had been made to resolve the impasse by suggesting that the high-rise be moved off the Songhees to one of several city lots or numerous private holdings that could accommodate the building. This suggestion was rejected by the provincial government on the basis of a substantial relocation cost running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. In rebuttal, Alderman Glazier, responsible for planning, said that he had information suggesting that the relocation cost could be as low as \$20,000. However, the government has not yielded in its resolve that the high-rise project should proceed.

Why should Victorians be concerned?

Construction of the high-rise could commence in October. The provincial government supported by the majority of city council is hastening the construction of the high-rise and townhouse complex before the city's plan is completed and approved.

The high-rise would be built on public land, subsidized by both British Columbian and Canadian taxpayers and located overlooking Victoria's cherished Inner harbor. Public money is financing an unwanted intrusion which may well set a precedent. Vocal minorities have done their best to inform the public, The silent majority must speak.

The writer, a structural engineer, is president of the Victoria Waterfront Enhancement Society.

Victoria Star June 9 1993

Residents reject new condos in Songhees

By Sherry McNeil

Victoria News

Noisy ferries and rumbling float planes, they can put up with. But two 14-unit condominium buildings built in the water are something residents of the Royal Quays in the Songhees aren't going to stand for.

That's why the City of Victoria arranged for a public meeting with Malcolm Lyle of Pacific National Investments Ltd., the developer who has plans to build the condominium complexes on concrete pilings in front of the Royal Quays. Over 60 people crowded into the City Hall meeting last Thursday.

"After the first meeting it was obvious the city didn't have the answers to all the questions," says Lyn MacDonald, the chairman of the Royal Quays strata council speaking in a later interview.

But the results of Thursday's meeting were much more satisfying, she says. "We wanted to make sure this wasn't just going to be a rubber stamp approval."

"I think we were trying to find out what kind of studies have to be

done before this can be approved," says MacDonald. "It's up to the developer to show a plan that has taken into account all of the issues."

Victoria planning chairman Coun. Laura Acton says council must "look after the interests of the city. We'd like to look at what our options are."

Aside from city approval, Lyle must abide by the Navigable Water Protection Act.

Lyle bought the Songhees property back in 1988, and says his development proposal was all part of a master plan for the Songhees five years ago. The condominiums are only one phase of a proposal that may also include a 200 to 300 berth marina.

MacDonald says she and supporters are opposed to any structure built in the water, particularly because of

harbor traffic safety concerns. Any building is "just going to squeeze in the harbor and not allow it to be a transportation venue," says MacDonald. Since May 22, 4,000 signatures have been collected on a petition.

"Exclusive residential use on a water lot is not a value this community holds at this time," concludes Acton.

Harbor condo idea rattles council

By Carla Wilson
Times-Colonist staff

The spectre of two condominiums built on pilings in the water off Songhees is haunting Victoria councillors surprised by the city's own zoning rules.

Royal Quays residents are worried that safety in busy Victoria harbor would be compromised and views blocked by the pair of three-storey buildings the Calgary-based Pacific National Investments Ltd. wants to build.

But Mayor David Turner says the city may be limited by what it can do. The zoning allowing development on the water lots was passed in the 1960s by the previous council, whose decision has returned to "haunt us," said Turner.

Lynn MacDonald, strata council president for the 90-unit Royal Quays, is worried the buildings will crowd the harbor — home to a wide range of transportation services including float planes and ferries — and increase the risk of accidents.

Residents are also concerned about the environmental impact of constructing two buildings in an area frequented by wildlife such as seals and sea birds.

"Water is sacred," MacDonald said Friday. "What was accept-

Water is sacred. What was acceptable in 1986 is not really acceptable now

Sat May 20/93

— Lynn MacDonald
Royal Quays strata council president

able in 1986 is not really acceptable now."

MacDonald is calling on the city to hold a public hearing into the project and explore legal avenues.

The issue points to the need for a harbor commission, she said. Bernice Packford, past president of the Victoria-Esquamit Working Harbors Commission, also opposes the plan.

"It alienates more of the waterfront to residential uses and not marine and industrial uses."

Victoria's advisory design panel recently reviewed the plans and tabled them, with some recommendations on the design.

One building would go up at the foot of Coopers Place, on a 1,900-square-metre water lot, and another at the foot of Paul Kane Place, on 1,750 square metres of water.

The modern-style buildings with stucco exterior would each

To build, the developer needs council to approve a development permit, a statutory building scheme, and proposed variances on the zoning.

Coun. Laura Acton, planning chairman, wants project architect Jan Zak to meet with residents.

"It was very alarming and surprising that the zoning was in place," said Acton.

"It was always my understanding that there was going to be a marina there with a tea house. I had no idea until I read the zoning bylaw that this could happen."

The situation has changed since the zoning was approved.

"This is 10 years later and I think given the concerns that the residents have presented, there's a very different attitude there now. There's a built-up community in the Songhees," said Acton.

Coun. Kelly Armstrong, who is on the advisory design panel, said he cannot vote on the project because he owns a condominium in Ocean Park Towers at Songhees and would be in a conflict.

But he suggested Friday that strata councils could jointly buy the water lots and preserve them as they wish.

Officials with Royal Sealink Express, the Victoria Clipper and AirBC have reserved comment until they have time to evaluate the condominium plans.

Receiver to complete work at Songhees luxury condos

Berkeley Point Realty Services Ltd. has been appointed receiver for the faltering \$18-million Royal Quays luxury condominium project on Songhees.

Work — at a standstill since June — resumes next week on developer Bob Evans's 90-unit development. It should be wrapped up in 60 days.

The lenders, Standard Trust Co. of Toronto and First Cambridge Bancorp of Vancouver, along with Denford Construction Management Ltd. of Victoria, and Royal Quays Tradeco (made up of the 32 trades working on the project) worked together to have Berkeley Point take over completion of the two buildings, a joint release said Friday.

Standard Trust financed 90 per cent of the project.

James Houston of Berkeley Point said all parties agreed to honor their existing agreements to finish construction.

Additional money is coming from Standard Trust under the terms of the original construction financing, the release said. Gordon Denford said another \$1.6 million will be provided in extra funding.

"We have a handle on everything now and what has to be done."

Denford's company will become project manager to work with Berkeley Point.

The trades needed \$894,000 to complete the buildings and they were also owed part of their last payment.

The 20 unsold units will be back on the market immediately, the release said.

Cost overruns on the project, officially opened by Premier Vander Zalm in June, have been blamed for Evans's financial problems.

His company, Pacific National Developments Ltd., has been under receivership of Coopers and Lybrand Ltd. since Aug. 14.

Evans said earlier that he's invested more than \$600,000 of his own money in this project.

"This is a takeover," he said Friday.

Evans would not comment on the situation further, but said he'll make a statement next week.

The Royal Quays are just part of Evans' \$100-million Pacific Nations Project. The planned marina, hotel and commercial buildings are owned by Pacific National Investments, he said.

When asked if they would go ahead, Evans said, "Eventually, yeah."

Work still stalled on Royal Quays

Work at the almost-completed Royal Quays condominiums on the Songhees land remains shut down while negotiations continue on trade cost overruns.

Work stopped at the site June 15 because of cost overruns of about \$1 million on 31 trade contracts.

Each contract is being audited to determine how much is owed and

whether the claims are legitimate.

Initially it was hoped the shut-down would last only a couple of weeks but negotiations have taken longer than expected, said Bob Evans, Pacific National Developments Ltd. president.

Discussions are now about 90 per cent completed, he said.

"Our solicitors are working on new agreements for completion with everyone involved . . . we hope to be back (working on the construction) very shortly."

One of the condominium buildings is 98 per cent finished and the other is scheduled for completion by the end of this month.

City council on hunt for allies in lawsuit over Songhees lots

By Bill Cleverley
Times Colonist staff

Victoria city council is hoping other municipalities will join it in court to keep Victoria taxpayers off the hook for millions of dollars in damages.

After losing a court case with a developer over Songhees water lots, the city has decided to appeal. And it wants the Union of B.C. Municipalities to join it in the action.

"Because the point in law is so important to all B.C. municipalities, we've requested their enjoining us in the appeal," acting mayor David McLean said Friday.

A judge ruled in December that the city broke a contract with Pacific National Investments three years ago when it rezoned two water lots in the Songhees.

PNI was to develop five lots on the Songhees waterfront, including two "water lots" — literally, lots that are under the water. Their plan was a three-storey building on a floating platform out over the harbor, with the first floor commercial and the top floors luxury condos.

The 1987 Victoria council rezoned the

property to allow the project.

PNI then developed two other condo projects on the land lots. But when it went to get building permits in 1993 for the water lots, there was public outrage.

Objections to the "condos on stilts" at public meetings saw a new city council vote to rezone the lots to single-level commercial development only. PNI said that made their project not viable financially.

PNI sued and after weeks of trial, B.C. Supreme Court Justice Ken MacKenzie ruled that the rezoning was a breach of contract. The judge said the city breached its contract with PNI by changing the zoning without giving the company enough time to get its project done.

The city agreed to the 1987 rezoning, MacKenzie said, and benefited from it with PNI putting 30 per cent of land toward parks, when it only had to put in five per cent.

McLean said the city believes the municipality should have the unfettered ability under the Municipal Act to change zoning without fear of lawsuits.

Times-Colon

THE COLONIST: founded 1858

THE TIMES:

Published by Thomson Newspapers Company Limited, P.O. Box 300, Victoria

Second class mail registration number 0515

Wednesday, May 26, 1993

It's not too late to save our harbor

Harbor threatened

Victoria's planning department has received tentative plans for the development of two water lots in Victoria Harbor, lots known as Royal Quays 3 and 4. The proposal is to build two three-storey condominium buildings, each containing 14 units.

This proposal seems in conflict with a working harbor that is not overly large and is very busy. There is land still available on Vancouver Island for condos. There is little water in Victoria's harbor for marine interests.

Perhaps the city could be persuaded to at least wait for implementation of a harbor commission for consultation, before setting a precedent that would restrict marine use of one of the world's great harbors.

May 26/93 Dallas Rogers,
Victoria.

What could have possessed city councillors a few years ago when they approved a couple of water lots for future development in Victoria's Inner Harbor?

But then the water-lot approvals were part and parcel of the massive Songhees project, so who should be surprised? The Songhees development has saddled Victoria with some mighty depressing architecture at water's edge, all in all a dismal legacy for residents and visitors alike over the next few generations.

The Inner Harbor is the heart of this community. Even when Songhees was approved seven years ago, this exquisite but modestly sized waterway was busy, with commercial and recreational boat and float plane traffic. Now it is even more so.

Imagine imposing on this busy marine scene a couple of three-storey buildings (14 condos in each), built on piles 100 feet offshore, one off Cooperage Place, the other at the foot of Paul Kane Place. If those names aren't familiar, they are prominent points along Westsong Way on the north side of the harbor.

"The thinking at the time was that it would add variety to have some elements that would be on the water side," says a deputy planner. Variety? Mining the harbor would add variety, too.

Zoning would require each of these proposed buildings to provide a public walkway around the exteriors, says the deputy. These would give people new vantage points and the buildings would shelter people on the walkway from the wind.

Let's fill the harbor with buildings then. So many more "vantage points." So much more shelter from the wind.

Every intrusion into the Inner Harbor diminishes the city's primary downtown asset. It will compound congestion and it is marine space which will be lost forever.

It seems the Calgary-based developer needs a development permit from city council and also wants some zoning variances. Council should do everything within its legal power to scupper any and all development on these water lots. It will surely have the backing of most regional residents in trying to minimize the pathetic planning myopia of councillors past.

SONGHEES RESIDENTS BATTLE PROPOSED HARBOUR ZONING

Over 150 people turned out for the Victoria West Land Use Committee meeting on Tuesday, September 12 at the Princess Mary Restaurant. The crowd was primarily composed of Songhees residents, due to the controversial nature of a discussion about city-initiated re-zoning of the water lot and land that extends from Paul Kane Place to Lime Bay.

There is intense speculation among residents that the water lot and land, which is currently owned by the province, is slated to become a marina, restaurant and club.

Allison Meyer, a planner with the City of Victoria's Planning and Development Department, assured the crowd that the City-initiated proposal was "not for a marina," and reminded

residents that under the current zoning, a marina is already allowed on site.

"The City is not undertaking this [proposal] in order to promote a marina or to facilitate a marina," she said, but rather to improve some of the zoning allowances, such as building heights, and rule out other inappropriate uses for the lot allowed under current zoning status.

However, discussion quickly reverted to residents' concerns about the possibility of a marina in the location, including pollution, parking and safety due to the fact that the harbour entrance is a designated seaplane runway, and all boating traffic is supposed to be confined to the other side of the harbour.

In an unofficial show of hands, attendees unanimously voted to have the area

re-zoned as parkland. Land Use Committee Chair Diane Carr agreed to submit a motion to the Victoria West Community Association board to have a letter sent by the board to the appropriate minister requesting that the subject land and water lot holdings be designated as a park.

Other agenda items included the presentation of a preliminary development plan for a mixed-use business and residential development at 95 Esquimalt Road, a proposal to amend zoning to remove transient accommodation as a permitted use in an existing condominium at 10 Paul Kane Place, and a request for a small-lot subdivision at 424 Skinner Street.

Diane Carr's column will return in the November issue.

Times-Colonist Saturday, September 14, 1991

A superb opportunity becomes Olde Nowhere

by Adele Freedman, design critic of the Globe and Mail
[reprinted from the Globe and Mail]

[photograph of Songhees turreted condos with the cutline: Songhees condominiums as seen from Bastion Square: "A lesson in the commodification of meaningful landscape."

Pop a Gravel before touring Songhees, a conspicuous new development on Victoria's Inner Harbor. The sight of so many spires, turrets, dormers, mansards and gables in one place turns the stomach. Logically, it doesn't seem possible that a beautiful and historic location could be disfigured in the name of knitting it into a city "visually, physically, functionally and emotionally," to quote the official objectives for the Songhees area. Nevertheless, that's what the province of British Columbia and the City of Victoria have allowed to happen. A precious public resource has been squandered on a kitschy residential "Neighbourhood," more accurately described as a Victoriana theme park.

The history of the Songhees development is complicated and messy. It involves disputes between the province and the city, who once shared jurisdiction over the lands, and a series of reports and studies culminating, in 1986, in a policy plan and design guidelines based on an overall review of the project by Vancouver architect Barry Downs of Downs/Archamault. As set forth in that document, which was published as a proposal call subject to "new ideas that developers and investors may bring forth," Songhees was to be a mixed-use development, accessible by car, boat, bicycle, public transit, foot and water-taxis. There would be public open spaces, two distinct shopping areas, a school and a population of 4,000 to 4,500, representing "a full range of household types, age and income groups."

The design guidelines were a recipe for disaster. Through words and sketches, developers were strongly urged to "respond to the City's strong architectural heritage" by such means as domes, pitched roofs and "details sympathetic with Victorian or Edwardian design." Regrettably, Victoria City Council dropped the most promising aspect of the plan, mixed-use, and adopted Downs's most noxious recommendation, a period theme.

"In my view that was the single biggest mistake," said George Giles, former director of the Provincial Capital Commission, who chaired the design panel, since disbanded, that initially reviewed the Songhees schemes. "We said to people: 'Don't read that document too literally.' We saw there was a complete acceptance of the letter rather than the spirit. That's Victoria's problem. It's got a preconceived idea of what it is -- an England that never was."

Cross the Johnson Street Bridge into Songhees, and you're in Olde Nowhere. No offices, shops, businesses, street life. No co-ops or subsidized housing of any kind, other than a single senior citizen's residence, designed by Arthur Erickson, for a site far removed from the harbor, before the development got going. Songhees is little more than a retirement ghetto filled with pricey, tortured-looking condominiums offering breathtaking views -- a lesson in the commodification of meaningful landscape. Many of the developers who bought parcels were two-bit novices who went belly-up, but not before depositing tonnes of so-called "heritage" on the shores of the Inner Harbor. Many of the units are vacant because there are 1,800 new condo units currently for sale in the Greater Victoria area, more than the market can bear.

To what purpose, and in whose interest, is this nonsense? If mimicry is the sincerest form of flattery, it's Francis Mawson Rattenbury, architect of the Empress Hotel and Legislative Buildings across the bay from Songhees, who benefitted the most. There's scarcely a form or detail belonging to either of Rattenbury's major works that hasn't been echoed at Songhees, in addition to all manner of grotesqueries of no immediately obvious lineage, such as the distinctive turrets of Queensport, which resemble cartoon witches' hats. Also on show are apoplectic rows of dormered windows and, in the case of Ocean Park Towers, an arrangement of dark brown devices -- hopped roof and gables galore -- that scores the eyeball.

So far, there's one building on site that isn't strictly residential, a 290-room luxury hotel, still under construction, called Ocean Pointe Resort -- get the pointe? A design by Downs, it's already showing signs of dormers and dormerettes to come. Downs/Archambault also designed Edith Cavell, and adjacent condominium that got so much bad press for faulty construction it was renamed 50 Songhees Road.

Many other aspects of the development have come under fire. For instance, all walkways, outdoor staircases, and windswept balconies: the open balconies at Edith Cavell have been enclosed. The exclusion of children under 16 was contested, which resulted in a bylaw allowing them in, provided their parents are tenants, not owners. Those who bought into a kid-free environment continue to fume.

Most of all, Victoria residents resent the waterfront having been privatized. Joggers and strollers do frequent the continuous walkway along the water's edge, generous in some places, mingy in others -- but many locals won't go near Songhees, unless it's to swill beer at Spinnaker's, a pub located in a renovated old house at one edge of the site, a real place. The rest could have become a real place, too, had it not been turned into a view factory servicing incoming retirees and offshore executives.

Victoria only had to look as far as Vancouver for inspiration. False Creek is an exemplary residential development, diverse and imaginative, opposite Granville Island, itself a model redevelopment of industrial lands. Surely, there was something to be learned from both.

And why look to Rattenbury for design guidelines when you've got Erickson's addition to Laurel Point Inn? The addition, which overlooks the Inner Harbor, is all light and terraced glass, free of affectation and in tune with its setting. It has become a rallying point for architects fed up with the way bad design is packaged as heritage. It's time politicians realized heritage doesn't stop at 1900. Culture is heritage. Good design is heritage. Places for ordinary people to live and work and hang out are heritage. A few more theme parks like Songhees, and there'll soon be no heritage at all.

Times Colonist - August 20, 1987 by Les Leyne

Songhees poison soil must go

Contaminated soil on parts of the Songhees property must be removed in a major cleanup before development can begin.

Oil company tanks on the site for years have left a residue of hydrocarbon contamination on the site - including high lead measurements.

Asphalt, solvent and lead-copper fungicide contamination may also pose a potential problem, say some officials, from an asphalt shingle plant that shared the site.

Two firms, Petro-Canada and Shell Oil, have worked out tentative arrangements to truck away huge volumes of soil for disposal at Capital Regional District facilities.

Lead contamination is so high at some spots, however, that the dirt will be trucked away in sealed drums and stored elsewhere.

New Democratic party MLA Moe Sihota (Esquimalt-Port Renfrew), who released documents Friday showing the extent of the problem, is demanding assurance from Economic Development Minister Grace McCarthy that the site will be safe for development.

Sihota said developers were committing millions of dollars to the site, but had no assurance yet that it is environmentally safe, clean land.

He said McCarthy had been aware of the problem for some time but was trying to rush through the cleanup to make way for construction of hotels, restaurants, housing and parks.

McCarthy was not available for comment Friday, but B.C. Enterprise Corp. spokesman Craig Aspinall said the contaminated area covered 1.2 hectares at two sites on Songhees.

One site was formerly used by Shell and Petro-Canada to store bunker oil and gasoline, while the second site was Sidney Roofing Ltd.'s asphalt shingle plant.

The oil companies had performed soil tests to determine the degree of contamination, and B.C. Enterprise was testing for tar contamination at the shingle plant site, said Aspinall.

"All of the developers involved in purchasing properties have been advised that contaminated soil is being removed from the site and their purchase agreements will be completed when the cleanup process is finished.

Meanwhile, concern is mounting over where the oil-contaminated soil will end up.

Shell wants to truck as much as 5,000 cubic metres of earth from the site and spread it out at the CRD's Millstream Road septage site, where weather and natural growth can break the oil down.

After it has been cleaned some

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what, it would be trucked to the Hartland Avenue dump.

Chief CRD engineer Mike Williams said he had set some conditions to which Shell had not yet responded, but said the CRD had no objections if the contaminated ground could be cleaned to mutually agreed standards.

Provincial authorities, however, are balking at the plan. The lands ministry owns the lagoon and wants Shell to buy it — if it wants to dump oil contaminants on it.

Petro-Canada estimates it will have to truck about 2,000 cubic metres of contaminated soil from Songhees.

The company first wanted to mix it with gravel at Capital City Paving's Goldstream Meadows gravel pit, then use it for roadbed material — but the provincial waste management branch has blocked that plan.

The latest plan is to mix it with gravel to bring contamination levels down, then ship it to Hartland Avenue for daily cover on the dump.

As for the lead concentrations on the higher part of the land, Petro-Canada's western distribution manager Nigel Hill said in a letter to B.C. Enterprise: "For the lead contaminated areas, it is our intention to spread this soil, together with the worst lead-contaminated soil from the lower bench area, onto the remaining tank pads, in order to weather this soil as much as possible prior to its removal in drums."

Soil contaminated with lead in excess of 300 parts per million would be loaded in drums and stored at Petro-Canada's Vancouver facilities.

Songhees developer threatened b

By Judith Lavoie
Times-Colonist staff

A threat of foreclosure is hanging over Bob Evans, developer of two luxury Songhees condominium buildings.

Financial problems are plaguing Evans because of cost overruns on the almost-completed Royal Quays buildings and intense negotiations are under way between Evans company, Pacific National Developments Ltd., and Toronto-based Standard Trust Co., which financed 90 per cent of the \$18-million project.

"If a reasonable agreement is reached, no foreclosure will be necessary and I don't envision one — it wouldn't make sense," said Evans, who has "much more" than \$600,000 of his own money invested in the project.

"A lot of my own money is in this and I am very proud of it," he said.

At a meeting last Friday of trades companies and Denford Construction Management Ltd., general contractors for the development, a "proposal to complete the project" was circulated.

The paper sets out Standard's future financing details but Standard Trust spokesman Greg Holden said he

does not know if the company was consulted.

"I don't know about any meetings. It's all news to me," Holden said.

Standard Trust regional manager, Jack Beauchamp, was not available for comment Thursday.

The proposal says: "A foreclosure proceeding will be initiated by Standard. The legal proceedings will be friendly as between Standard, the trades and First Cambridge (a minor financier). Evans may fight foreclosure."

Evans said he had no idea where the proposal came from and, "no application has been made to the court. This is all speculation on their part."

The proposal suggests Denford Construction Management Ltd. be retained as the project manager to supervise "all aspects of construction, approvals, marketing and sales."

It will take an estimated \$2.5 million to complete the Royal Quays buildings and there is a shortfall of about \$1 million. The overruns give Standard Trust the right to foreclose and Evans cannot look elsewhere for financing without their permission.

The buildings, which have 70 of the 90 units sold, are

projected to make a profit. If another back brought in, profit divisions would have to be revised. The trades would need \$884,000 to complete buildings and they are also owed part of the payment.

"The last construction draw was withheld by Standard. They have the right to do that because of the overruns," Evans said.

Evans said some of the budget overruns were caused by him and others were not.

An additional problem is the plumbing contract the project went bankrupt earlier this year and is before the courts as Pacific National Developments alleges it paid for supplies not used in the project.

Gordon Denford, of Denford Construction Management, said he could not comment on the problem because he is not privy to discussions between Evans and the lenders.

"He is trying to reach an accommodation with the lenders. They are the ones calling the shots. . . . It will come down the pipe I don't know," Denford said. "No one is trying to push Evans out of the project."

"The trades and our company have no interest other than what is owed to us. We don't have the power to do anything," he said.

foreclosure

interest other than what is owed to us. We don't have the power to do anything," he said.

The waterfront Royal Quays buildings were officially opened with great fanfare by Premier Vander Zalm last month.

The financial hiccups will not affect the remainder of the ambitious \$100-million Pacific Nations project, Evans said.

The planned marina, hotel and commercial buildings are Pacific National Investments projects, he said.

PNI is a separate company from Pacific National Developments, Evans said.

"Except for myself, they are all different shareholders."

The two ultra-luxury Kings Landing condominium buildings will be the next Pacific Nations projects at "at this point they have not been affected," Evans said.

It was originally planned to use Standard Trust finance Kings Landing. "However, a different lender has been found," he said.

Standard Trust also financed the Edith Cavell project on the Songhees land but withdrew during construction, and alternative financing was found.