



## Heritage Vancouver

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City of Vancouver  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council,

With regards to the rezoning application for 1805 Larch Street, we are submitting comments related to the importance of community space such as the one that St. Marks Church has provided for the community of Kitsilano.

It is our position that for neighbourhoods to function and promote community they must provide local amenities that contribute to a wide range of community needs. We feel that community space is one of the essential components in creating and promoting neighbourhood identity and cohesion.

One of the things that has defined this site over the years has been how well the community space it provided served the neighbourhood and wider community. This has been documented in the numerous articles and accounts that describe its importance to people as a place for a preschool, public health sessions, concerts, addiction recovery groups and extreme weather response. The author (and resident in the neighbourhood) of a recent Vancouver Sun Opinion Piece expressed his hope for ways for people to come together and a sense of community be built once the new apartments are completed.

It is important that neighbourhoods are approached through a community-based planning process to discuss potential changes and have a meaningful say on how they can accommodate the changing needs of the city. It is our position that through such a neighbourhood wide process, cases such as this, where aspects that contribute to the wellness of neighbourhood are not identified as important, could be avoided by bringing them to the planning process at the outset of the process. This would in turn allow their importance and potential retention to be planned in advance. While the staff response to this has been to refer to the 2018 Making Space for Arts and Culture- Cultural Infrastructure Plan, we believe there is room to be more holistic, particularly with these spaces that are embedded in and contribute to neighbourhoods.

We encourage Council and staff to find ways to address the important role community spaces play in creating community and consider options to promote retention or relocation of community-serving space while being able to provide housing affordability through this secured rental project.

*Sincerely,*

Heritage Vancouver Society