

2021-12-01

Development Services  
City of Victoria  
No.1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC  
V8W 1P6

**Attn.: Miko Betanzo**, Senior Planner

**Re: 515/519 Rithet Street - Development Variance Permit Application**

**Dear Miko**

We are pleased to submit this Development Variance Permit letter for **515/519 Rithet Street** on behalf of James Bay Ventures, known as CASMAN PROPERTIES (the Owner). The development proposes to construct a four-storey multi-unit residential building with underground parking. The 18-unit building will provide 1, 2 and 3-bedroom condominium suites.

This letter represents an abbreviated description of the project and is complemented by a full description in our Letter to Mayor and Council.

## INTRODUCTION

During the design phase, the Owner and design team engaged in a consultation process with City of Victoria planning staff, with the owners of neighbouring properties and with the JBNA, (*James Bay Neighborhood Association*). The design team continuously refined their design based on the feedback received.

## PROJECT DESIGN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD INTEGRATION

From early design stages, the project considered its integration with the neighborhood as a priority:

- Building height set to 4 stories in lieu of 6 or more permitted by the Bylaw
- The number of units has been set to 18, and the building provides a diverse mix of unit sizes and affordability levels, from one-bedroom suites suitable for single persons or small families up to three-bedroom family suites.
- The building area has been sized below the allowable FSR to provide tenants' and neighbours' livability and ensure that vehicle and bicycle parking is provided entirely on site.
- A rooftop amenity space with BBQ outlets will provide opportunities for gardening, gathering, and community building within the property.

Project design respectfully responds to earlier neighbours' and planning staff comments:

- West neighbours (multi-unit buildings on Menzies St.) privacy concern: placing the parkade ramp on the west side creates an improved 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> storey setback; the 4<sup>th</sup> floor has been set back an additional 1.2m from the face of the lower floors.
- East neighbour (4-storey condo): the project proposes a condominium building in line with neighbours stated support for such a building, vs. rental.
- In consideration of both east and west neighbours' privacy, the proposed building provides high sill windows and privacy screens at balconies
- North neighbour (apartment building across Rithet St): no comments or objections.
- South neighbour (Amica Somerset House, 540 Dallas Rd.): no comments or objections.
- Building proportions, the ground floor level, Rithet Street building entrance and the two front suites entrances directly from the street have been developed to provide a positive interaction of the building with the street and promote the proposed front yard setback variance.
- Building massing, articulation and cladding materials:
  - integrate with the scale and residential characteristics of the neighbourhood
  - formalize the push-pull effect to interpret a traditional distribution of building elements and massing
  - present a pleasant building frontage and entrance to the street
  - present a limited variety and distribution of cladding materials
- Elevated ground floor level provides increased privacy, livability and improved public/private separation between sidewalk and living spaces while maintaining accessible access to the building.

In consultation with the City planning staff, the following setbacks are considered acceptable for a variance request. The proposed project exceeds all setback requirements.

- Front setback (min) 3.5m with porches permitted to encroach by 1.5m
- Front setback at the fourth storey 6m (min)
- West side yard setback: 4m
- West side yard at fourth storey: 7m
- East Side yard: 3m (min)
- Rear setback: 4.5m (min)

## CONCLUSION

We trust that the proposed project will provide a desirable mix of residential units close to expanding employment opportunities and a gratifying addition to the James Bay neighbourhood.

Please contact our office if you require any additional information or clarification on this application.

Sincerely,

**BIRLIGA + CRESPO ARCHITECTURE**

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Sorin Birliga, Architect AIBC, LEED AP