

2021-12-01

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

Attn.: Mayor & Council

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

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.

INTRODUCTION

This project on Rithet Street is the fourth multi-unit residential project in the Casman Properties portfolio in the Greater Victoria area. Each of these projects has been thoughtfully designed to meet the needs and character of their surrounding neighborhood. Their projects are proudly built by Casman Projects, a division of the Casman Group, who have been building neighborhoods for over 40 years.

Early in the design phase, the Owner and design team undertook a consultation process with the owners of neighbouring properties, the JBNA, (*James Bay Neighborhood Association see letter dated August 13th, 2021 attached*) and with City of Victoria planning staff and continuously refined their design based on the feedback received to achieve a project which compliments its surroundings and provides a desired mix of housing to the community.

EXISTING ZONING, OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The current zoning is R3-2 Multiple Dwelling District and will remain unchanged

The site is located in the block between Dallas, Menzies, Rithet and South Turner. Rithet is a Local Street with the main access from Menzies St. which is a Secondary Collector. The OCP identifies most of the block (including the project site) as 'Urban Residential'. 'Traditional Residential' areas are present on Menzies St. adjacent to the project site and further on South Turner Street.

This proposed development conforms with the Vision in the citywide context and Strategic directions of the OCP contributing to:

- Increase the city's residential stock (OCP 21.15.6)
- Maintain a variety of housing types and tenures for a range of age groups and incomes (OCP 21.16.1)
- Maintain an interesting diversity of land uses, housing types and character areas (OCP 21.16.3).

The 2 parcels incorporated by the proposal are 963.1 m² in total area and are currently occupied by 2 houses and one single car garage. The site is generally flat sloping down approximately 0.7m from the south to the north corner of the property and approximately 0.5m along Rithet Street.

The neighbourhood encompasses a mix of Four-plex Rental (37 Menzies and Rithet corner), Tri-Plex (29 Menzies), 5-Suite Rental (23 Menzies), 5-Suite Transient Hotel-style Vacation Accommodations (19 Menzies), 6-Suite Short-Term Rental (15 Menzies), 7-Suite Condominium (502 Dallas), 4-storey multi-unit residential buildings, a 7-storey building at Rithet / South Turner St. corner, a 12-storey high Beckley Manor and the 4-storey Somerset House retirement living on Dallas Road. The immediate neighbourhood does not have a consistent architectural style and character that would establish an overriding design context.

519 Rithet is temporarily occupied by close associates of the Owner and the tenancy of 515 Rithet ends in December 2021 therefore no occupants are being displaced through this project.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

MASSING & SITING

The building design concept is based on several imperatives:

- contribute positively to the pedestrian and urban experience along Rithet St
- massing and architectural expression be sensitive to the smaller scale multi-unit buildings to the west, transition and connect to the multi-unit residential to the east and across Rithet St
- the 4th floor is recessed and provide an increased setback and distance from the adjacent residential buildings on the west and a reduced perception of height from the street (north side)

The building form and size mitigate the Bylaw requirements by conforming to the maximum permitted Floor Space Ratio (FSR) and proposing a reduced building height in exchange for exceeding the minimum setbacks.

STREETSCAPE / RELATION TO STREET

The 2 ground floor units facing Rithet St. are accessible directly from the street, through large private patios which provide a soft, small scale residential street-to-building connection.

The recessed 4th floor provides a variation in the plane of the street wall and the perception of a reduced height.

A modern design wood fence surrounding the property will replace any existing fencing and provide privacy and security to the ground floor units and restrict access to the bottom of the open stairwells leading to the underground parkade.

EXTERIOR FINISHES

The project uses a palette of durable materials capable of weathering gracefully, such as cementitious panel cladding in a two-tone combination and anodized or coated aluminum railings at balconies and patios with frosted glass panels at balconies.

The smooth surfaces of cementitious panels and glass will be complemented by wood textured materials at balconies soffits and roof overhangs, natural wood fencing on the property line and harmonious landscape.

The combination of these materials relates to components of the existing context while contributing to the aesthetic direction of future developments and generate visual gratification for residents.

LIFESTYLE

The future Rithet multi-family project will provide 18 units of thoughtfully designed 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes that the Developer anticipates attracting homeowners spanning a range of demographics. With proximity to outdoor activities as well as downtown the location will attract downsizers who already call James Bay home to first time buyers into the Victoria market.

The ground-oriented units on the main floor are well suited for family living and the rooftop amenity space provides opportunities for gardening, gathering, and community building within the property.

STRUCTURAL BRIEF

The proposed building is a 4 storey plus rooftop amenities wood structure over a reinforced concrete underground parkade.

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL BRIEF

This project is designed to meet Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code (BC Building Code Subsection 10.2.3).

Fixtures and Accessibility

Standard mid-level residential plumbing fixtures will be specified within the mechanical scope. Accessible fixtures will be provided for washrooms as required. All fixtures will be lead free, CSA approved, and meet flow / flush volume requirements of the BC Building Code.

Domestic Water System

The domestic water entry point will be located in the mechanical room on the parking level with the fire suppression system water entry. Domestic hot water to the residential suites will be provided by a central domestic hot water system located in the mechanical room. Due to the high occupancy of the building, gas fired boilers are recommended. Hose bibbs will be provided in typical locations – front/back of building and the garbage room. The rooftop amenity space will also require a hose bibb. There will be a dog wash station in the parkade area with a hot/cold water connection.

Natural Gas

Natural gas distribution will be provided on this project for all gas-fired equipment. It is expected that the domestic hot water heaters and corridor ventilation make-up air unit will be gas-fired. Natural gas is expected for the first floor and fourth floor residential suites, and BBQ outlets will be provided for the rooftop amenity space.

Residential Suites

Space heating of the residential suites is proposed to be provided by electric baseboard heaters. The larger units will have electric fireplaces.

In accordance with the BC Step Code, residential suites are ventilated with an energy recovery ventilator (ERV) or similar system that reclaims heat from the exhaust air stream while providing fresh outside air continuously.

All units will have in-suite laundry with dryers vented to outside. Kitchen hoods and second bathrooms will also be vented to the building exterior.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

The site is well located and fully serviced by City infrastructure. It provides immediate proximity to amenities, public transportation, ocean, parks, trails and bike lanes.

- James Bay Village – 350m / 5 min walk
- Dallas Road, trails and cycling network – 200m
- Beacon Hill Park – 700m
- Two bus stations- 200m away on Niagara Street and 750m away on Douglas St. provide direct travel to Esquimalt / Royal Jubilee Hospital / South Oak Bay and Willows and convenient connection to other transit routes.

The numerous nearby employment opportunities available in the service and tourism industries and in the Provincial Government offices make this site desirable and suitable for an increased population density.

The project proposes to include underground parking accessed from Rithet Street to provide 21 stalls for 18 residential units in compliance with the by-law requirements. Electrical Vehicle charging stations will be provided as required.

Long term and short-term bicycle parking will also be provided in compliance with the by-law requirements.

SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN FEATURES

The building will be developed to meet Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code, with durable materials and a design that optimizes natural daylight.

Additional features, such as additional EV chargers, led lighting, ERVs (energy recovery ventilation units), highly insulated building and rooftop gardening are contemplated to be included during the next phases of project development, subject to maintaining the units price accessible to buyers.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND VARIANCES

The project has been developed with respect for the OCP guidelines, the neighbourhood as a whole and the feedback provided by the owners of the adjacent single-family homes. The project is developed in full compliance with the Bylaw FSR and compensates for exceeding the minimum by-law setbacks by providing a building height well below the permitted height and a significant recess of the 4th floor. The following is a summary of variances requested and compensatory provisions.

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DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

ZONE	R3-2	
AREAS	m ²	ft ²
SITE AREA	962.91	10,364.6
TOTAL FLOOR AREA	1,475.46	15,881.7

FSR (floor space ratio)	ALLOWED / REQUIRED	PROPOSED	VARIANCE REQUESTED
	1.6	1.53	--

DENSITY

Site Coverage - max (%)	40.00%	44.22%	4.22%
Site Coverage - max (m²)	385.16	425.80	40.64

Open Site Space - min (%)	60.00%	42.97%	17.03%
Open Site Space - min (m²)	577.74	413.79	163.95

Building Height - max (m)	18.5	15.95	--
Number of Storeys - max	6	4	--
Existing Average Grade (m)		11.25	--

OFF STREET PARKING (stalls)	REQUIRED	PROPOSED	VARIANCE REQUESTED
Resident Stalls	19.1	19	--
Visitors Stalls	1.8	2	--
TOTAL Stalls	20.9	21	--

BICYCLES			
Surface Bicycle Parking	6.0	6	--
Secured Bicycle Storage Stalls	21.3	22	--

SETBACKS (m)		REQUIRED	PLANNING SUPPORTED	PROPOSED BUILDING	PROPOSED BALCONY	VARIANCE REQUESTED
North (street boundary)	LEVEL 1-3	7.50	3.50	5.15	4.75	2.75
	L1 PATIO		2.00	2.50	-	--
	LEVEL 4		6.00	7.38	4.75	--
South (rear - 1/2 of bldg height)	LEVEL 1-3	7.98	4.50	4.95	4.50	3.48
	LEVEL 4		4.50	7.15	4.50	--
West (side - 1/2 of bldg height)	LEVEL 1-3	7.98	4.00	5.80	5.80	2.18
	LEVEL 4		7.00	7.12	7.00	--
East (side - 1/2 of bldg height)	LEVEL 1-3	7.98	3.00	3.20	3.20	4.78
	LEVEL 4		3.00	4.33	4.20	--

The project has been carefully developed by a cohesive team of architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, civil and landscape professionals and proposes an elegant and timeless architecture that responds to the wide-ranging character of the neighbourhood. We trust it will respond to the need of providing a well-balanced variety of suite sizes and add a gratifying development to the neighbourhood. Please contact our office if you require any additional information or clarification on this application.

Sincerely,

BIRLIGA + CRESPO ARCHITECTURE

Sorin Birliga, Architect AIBC, LEED AP