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October 27, 2022

Mayor and Council
Victoria City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor and Council:

We write regarding our proposed Development Variance Permit Application for 429 Vancouver Street.

Here are some facts pertaining to our possession and the history of the building:

- Originally built in the 1950's as a 7-unit purpose-built rental
- Permitted penthouse/third floor addition occurred in 86/87; included the unauthorized conversion of existing storage space to a studio suite and the addition of another unauthorized studio suite. Both unauthorized units have been rented since
- Fire in March 2019 alerted City to existence of both unauthorized suites; notices to previous owner regarding these infractions and required remedies remained unanswered
- We took possession of the building as of April 1, 2021; as of that time our household has reduced from 2 vehicles to 1
- Prior to possession we worked with the City of Victoria to remedy outstanding bylaw infractions, including life-safety concerns, fire inspection, provision of fire plan, updating of fire panel
- One of the unauthorized units was vacated as of March 2019 following a fire in that unit, referenced above
- The other unauthorized unit was vacated as of May 11th 2021

We propose to increase the number of suites from 8 to 10 utilizing existing floor area and bringing each suite up to current code requirements. These suites have in fact been rented continuously since 1987, until recent vacancy prompted by fire and City bylaw infractions. During that time, the existing 8 parking stalls have proved sufficient for all 10 suites. In fact, the parking has been underutilized for much of that time (please refer to details provided via the parking study). This is not surprising considering the building's proximity to Cook Street Village (1 block away) and the AAA Vancouver St. cycling network, located right outside our front door.

Current zoning regulations require 1.3 stalls per dwelling unit plus one visitor stall for a total of 14 stalls to serve the 10 suites, including the two proposed units. While the lot would not accommodate the addition of the required stalls, we are suggesting the following additions to offset this requirement:

- 6 short-term bike parking stalls
- 12 long-term bike parking stalls
- E-charging station that can serve 3 existing stalls

In the recent survey conducted by the City as a part of the Missing Middle Housing initiative, respondents confirmed one of the greatest influences of living a car-free lifestyle is the proximity to amenities. With our location being a 12-minute walk to the Inner Harbour or a 4-minute walk to Cook Street Village, it is fair to say that this building easily accommodates a car-free lifestyle. We trust in consideration of all the particulars outlined above that the City of Victoria will welcome the addition of these two rental suites.

We are also asking for three additional variances as part of this application. Please bear in mind, as the building stands now, none of the following requirements are being met; the changes we are proposing will be an improvement.

The first additional variance is to allow parking stalls to be located less than 6 meters (m) from the street boundary. The proposed site plan shows two parking stalls (stalls 1 and 8) as being closer than 6m to the street boundary.

The second additional variance is to reduce the 1m soft landscaping buffer to 0.83m in a small area beside stall 1; this will allow us to provide the required 3m x 3m site triangles. The rest of the 1m landscaping buffer in that area has been maintained or has increased to 1.58m at its widest point.

The final additional variance requested is to revise the roof structure and to increase the height of the walls in Unit 9 (the unit located above the garage). This will allow more windows, a reasonably sized kitchen/kitchen storage and

an overall more livable space. We believe the severe lack of rental units in Victoria justifies this request. This revision will not affect the neighboring properties as we are not adding any windows to the elevation directly facing a neighbor; the new windows will face the parking lot/laneway and Vancouver Street.

Sincerely,

Cole & Elizabeth Skelly