

**27 September 2022**

## Re: Project Rationale - 1702 Quadra Street / 862 Fisgard Street

This letter is a part of our resubmission following community and staff feedback, in relation to the Rezoning and Development Permit Application for 1702 Quadra Street / 862 Fisgard Street, a proposed 12 storey purpose-built rental building featuring 92 homes—ranging from studio to two bedroom—plus a large ground floor commercial retail unit (CRU). We are requesting to amend the property from the current R3-C zoning to a new site specific zoning.



## LOCATION

Located at the corner of Quadra and Fisgard, the proposed development is in close proximity to a variety of restaurants, shops, jobcentres and health services. This makes the subject site an ideal location for increased housing options and provides all the benefits of a 15 minute city lifestyle for future residents. The building will be positioned to support a range of transportation options promoting a car-lite lifestyle, including ample secure bicycle parking, Modo memberships for each unit and a new Modo vehicle located on-site.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

The site is surrounded by existing residential towers, ranging from 7 to 16 storeys in height. It shares sidewalk frontage along Quadra Street with the modernist First Baptist Church, and is directly across the street from the First Metropolitan United Church.

## HERITAGE

The proposal includes preserving elements of the existing heritage building, commissioned in 1911 by local business magnate, Lee Dyeand, and obtaining a heritage designation for the same. However, due to the poor soil conditions and the non conformance of the existing structure to the current day seismic requirements, we are restricted to preserving the Quadra Street and Fisgard Street elevations and potentially reconstruct some of the interior walls. We have undertaken considerable research into how the existing building has been renovated and altered throughout the twentieth century and we are proposing a solution that seeks to respect the key parts of the heritage facade in line with the Statement of Significance.

## POLICY CONTEXT

The proposal exceeds the density maximum of the existing zone R3-C and hence rezoning is being requested. The site has been designated as Urban Core - Residential within the OCP which expects new developments to make efficient use of land through compact development, reduce fossil fuel dependence through advancement of multi-modal connectivity and mobility, preserve the culture and heritage in the

area and provide much needed diverse housing that is affordable, secure and inclusionary. Our proposal meets and exceeds all these overarching expectations.

The Downtown Core Area Plan anticipates that the subject area will experience a shortfall of between 110,000 sqm and 600,000 sqm of space within the next 10 to 15 years, emphasising yet again that developing the existing lands to their full potential is not a choice but a responsibility. 1702 Quadra is currently a 16 unit rental building which is painfully underutilised for the area.

Based on the provisions in OCP that allow for additional density for projects that advance the policy's vision such as heritage preservation and purpose built rental housing in this case, we are requesting an FSR of 5.5.

#### AFFORDABILITY

The proposal intends to supply 10% of the rental units at 10% below market value (as defined by the Victoria Housing Strategy) for a period of 10 years. This equates to 9 homes and will be spread between different unit types in the building. If we are successful in the Rezoning process then we anticipate working with Senior Government funders to explore how we can provide an increased number of homes at a below-market level.

#### DESIGN

We have been working diligently with the City of Victoria staff and 546 Architecture team for more than a year to strike a balance between setbacks, building height, form and character. Several big moves have been introduced into the project in response to feedback from the community, the Advisory Design Panel, the Heritage Advisory Panel and the City staff.

This revised proposal allows significant setbacks along the north and west property lines respecting the existing residential building and since the small site can only accommodate minimal landscaping or amenity space, private balconies have been added to all the residential units above level 1.

To enhance the subject site's overall public realm experience the new building is setback from the existing brick facade allowing the original building to retain its street presence. Light coloured and contrasting exterior materials are being considered on the residential tower to act as background to the prominent heritage. A high quality architecture bike pavilion also is being proposed to create visual interest at street level.

Accessibility and adaptability were also considered when planning the unit and amenity area layouts.

### SAFETY & SECURITY

A gated below grade parade, perforated screen for the bicycle parking area, formal surveillance via electronic access control system for the building lobby, security cameras and exterior lighting positioned to illuminate all points of entry are being proposed.

### PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

From the subject property's doorstep there are diverse cycle routes, bus routes and walking options. In fact the presence of multiple bus routes leads to combined service as frequent as every 5 minutes during peak periods. The site also is just 250m from a couple of AAA cycling routes and receives a 95 for walkability and a bike score of 97 on Walkscore. There are eight Modo car share vehicles located within 500m of the site including three vehicles that are within a one block.

The proposal offers 3 below grade parking stalls to be shared between visitor, carshare and service vehicles. To support this request for variance in parking a dedicated modo car along with memberships for each residential unit are being provided for the lifetime of the building. Ecopasses are being considered for the commercial spaces and considerable bicycle parking is being proposed along with e-bike charging capabilities and dedicated cargo bike stalls.

### TENANT ASSISTANCE

We are working with the existing tenants and are committed to help them in relocating if and when the proposal moves forward. A tenant correspondence and assistance summary was submitted along with our rezoning and development application in December of 2021.

### SUMMARY

The proposed development meets the goals and objectives of the city policies and provides much needed housing on an underutilised lot in the urban core of our city. It offers to preserve the heritage on site, enlivens the existing streetscape and promises an architectural freshness to the neighbourhood. The additional density and the parking variances requested are rationally justified and balanced via extensive TDM measures and affordability extensions.

We are committed to being responsible developers, good neighbours and having honest, open dialogues within the communities where we do our work and are available to discuss project details with all stakeholders through a variety of channels. Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

Sincerely,

**Vinit Jain**

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