



May 17, 2018

City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

**Attn: Mayor Helps and Members of Council**

Dear Mayor Helps and Members of Council,

**Re: Maison Victoria  
NCCA17-0221  
Rezoning & Development Permit Application**

On behalf of our client, Milliken Real Estate Corporation, we are pleased to submit a Rezoning and Development Permit application for our proposed seniors living development located at the Fort Street and Birch Street intersection. Through our meetings with City Planning and our CALUC meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018, we believe this proposal is a representation of an inclusive and respectful process between all required stakeholders, and is a positive contribution to the North Jubilee community.

### **Description of Proposal**

Located at the gateway to the Royal Jubilee Hospital campus, the site is at the heart of Jubilee Village. Existing developments fronting onto the intersection and along Fort Street are a collection of one and two storey commercial/retail buildings, primarily flat-roof in design. The proposed addition to this community will replace the existing at-grade parking lot and 4 storey medical office at the northwest corner of the Fort & Birch Street intersection. A 4 storey apartment building is located directly north of the site, while single family houses flank the site to the west. The site across Birch Street to the east is currently under development.

Consisting of approximately 135 total units, the proposed 5 storey assisted living, memory care and independent living building will complement the hospital district, while provide a vibrant seniors living community that activates the corner condition of the site and provides an urban residential setting along Birch Street. The development proposes a primarily brick façade to supplement the existing community character and provide a building of permanence, while the flat roof design aligns with the existing context. While the OCP permits 6 storey construction, our preliminary discussion with the North Jubilee Neighbourhood Association (NJNA) indicated a preference for a lower building typology. As such, we are proposing a 5 storey design to accommodate this request. While the existing medical office will be removed, the applicant team is currently exploring ways to include the Rod of Asclepius signage to pay tribute to the heritage of the site.

### **Government Policies**



The site is designated as Large Urban Village (C-1 site) and Urban Residential (R3-2 site) within the Official Community Plan. Through ongoing consultation, the applicant team is working through the City of Victoria approvals process to ensure an inclusive Rezoning and Development Permit application, and that the proposed development conforms to the intent of OCP and supports the goals and objectives of City policies.

It is our understanding that the Local Area Plan for North Jubilee is currently under revision, but not yet adopted. Our ambition is to work with the NJNA to ensure the objectives of the future Local Area Plan are incorporated into the design as best possible.

In terms of the existing Jubilee Neighbourhood Plan, the proposed development supports the overall policy goals and objectives, such as:

- Recognize the community and help to develop its changing face
- Promote safety and security in the neighbourhood as an integral part of Community
- Encourage the provision of Community meeting space
- New residential development should respect the character of existing neighbourhood and street variety through the scale and form of housing
- Ensure new residential developments provide sufficient parking to meet their needs
- Encourage the development of nonprofit and rental housing
- Encourage the conservation of significant heritage resources in the neighbourhood with a view to maintaining them for future generations
- Develop different characters for the neighbourhood commercial areas within Jubilee through physical improvements
- Preserve and enhance existing City owned property for local use
- Recognize the importance of private landscape and open space to the character of the neighbourhood
- New development where appropriate should provide public use space and amenities
- Provide for the efficient, safe and sensitive management of traffic in the neighbourhood in order to reduce impacts of major arterials on residential areas
- Promote the use of bicycles and transit as alternatives to use of cars

The design intent is to focus density and height along the Fort Street commercial corridor and provide a gateway to the Royal Jubilee Hospital district. Active at-grade spaces are proposed in order to provide vibrancy and engage the community and significant open areas are located off these interior spaces. The overall architectural aesthetic uses a 3 and 4 storey “street wall” design to define a sense of place, yet provide relief to the 5 storey design. As the design leads north along Birch, the building significantly steps forward to break up the overall massing and transition to an urban housing form.

### **Project Benefits & Amenties**

The proposed development will provide care for approximately 135 seniors, which is desperately needed in both the North Jubilee area, as well as in Oak Bay and Victoria. To demonstrate that, we have heard from the President of the Victoria Hospitals Foundation (of which the Royal Jubilee Hospital is a beneficiary) that the Foundation is very supportive of our proposal, in large part because there is so little memory care available in

the community. When the hospital needs to discharge a patient with cognitive impairment, and they are no longer safe at home, the hospital staff doesn't have an acceptable seniors' community to refer them to. The Foundation, and we, see the proposed seniors' community as helping to alleviate that need. We see providing care for local seniors, who are often in crisis, as a significant benefit for North Jubilee.

In addition, we will be creating a high quality, aesthetically pleasing building to take the place of the tired, half vacant office building and surface parking lot that currently occupies the site. Our building will add attractive landscaping to the neighbourhood, and follows the Official Community Plan objective of creating a vibrant urban village concept at this location.

## **Need & Demand**

It's no secret that the population, as a whole, is getting older: we are living longer, healthier lives. As a result, the demand for senior's housing, in all forms, is extremely high and getting worse every year. Data released by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in their annual Seniors' Housing Report in 2017 indicated the overall vacancy rate for independent living residences across Metro Victoria and the Gulf Islands was 3.8% in 2017, compared with 4.0% in 2016, which is lower than the provincial average (4.5% in 2017 and 6.3% in 2016).

The lack of options for higher end care (dementia & long-term care) throughout Canada is particularly disturbing. According to the Alzheimer Society of Canada:

*"The number of Canadians with dementia is rising sharply. As of 2016, there are an estimated 564,000 Canadians living with dementia - plus about 25,000 new cases diagnosed every year. By 2031, that number is expected to rise to 937,000, an increase of 66 per cent.*

*Canada's health-care system is ill-equipped to deal with the staggering costs. As of 2016, the combined health-care system and out-of-pocket caregiver costs are estimated at \$10.4 billion per year. By 2031, this figure is expected to increase by 60 per cent, to \$16.6 billion. Roughly 56,000 Canadians with dementia are being cared for in hospitals, even though this is not an ideal location for care."*

<http://alzheimer.ca/en/Home/Get-involved/Advocacy/Latest-info-stats>

The proposed development will provide a continuum of care for the North Jubilee community; a unique and much-needed housing typology within the area.

## **Neighbourhood**

While home to many businesses, the Royal Jubilee Hospital and other significant health agencies and institutions, North Jubilee is primarily a residential neighbourhood. Many streets serve as important transportation routes to these major institutions and provide Jubilee residents easy access to all points around the City. Overall public open space is minimal, however residents can access small parks and play areas such as

the open park space along Fort Street at the Royal Jubilee Hospital. Begbie Green is located one block to the northwest.

The site is unique in that it is at the heart of the Jubilee Village and offers a substantial opportunity to redefine the urban fabric and provide a gateway to the hospital campus north along Fort Street. The site is approximately 1.16 acres in size and relatively flat in topography, providing an ideal environment for seniors living and an active interface with the street.

## Impacts

The north/south orientation of the site, along with the Large Urban Village and Urban Residential designations outlined in the Official Community Plan (OCP), is ideal to minimize impact on the neighbours. The amenity-rich ground floor programming will be set back from the corner, provide a plaza space, and activate the pedestrian realm along the Fort & Birch Street intersection. The Urban Residential portion of the site receives the Independent Living suites, which are located closer to Birch Street, offering an urban response to the environment and providing a greater rear yard and limiting impact on the neighbouring single family homes.

The active program spaces (fitness, games room, multi-use) are located adjacent to the intersection to engage the community and provide vibrancy to the village corner, however the residences located above the main level and along Birch Street, by nature, will be a quiet addition to the neighbourhood. The independent living units (R3-2 site) are located in closer proximity to the Birch Street property line to limit the impact on the single family houses to the west. Shadows are anticipated to have a minimal impact on adjacent properties, as illustrated through the enclosed shadow study.

## Design & Development Permit Guidelines

The proposed design is a contemporary addition to the community, offering high quality and durable materials that respect the existing neighbourhood. The intent of design is to support the Large Urban Village and Urban Residential designations outlined in the OCP, and be the first implementation of the OCP objectives for the North Jubilee Village redevelopment. Density will be focused towards the corner of the site, while urban-style Independent Living suites are proposed to the north, offering separation from the existing single family homes.

In response to the City of Victoria's *Design Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial*, the proposed development offers the following design features:

- A contemporary design and distinctive massing that accommodates the changing demographics in seniors housing
- A sensitive building design with high quality, durable materials that offer a sense of permanence and respects the character of the neighbourhood
- Highly articulated architectural form with muted colours that promotes a design character unique to Victoria.
- Implementation of wide sidewalks and open space at the intersection that provides a sense of place
- A program that is in high demand and a positive contribution to the community
- Relief in overall massing through a significant step in massing at the independent living units

- Recognition of the history of single family lots (50'-60' wide) in the area through use of vertical massing elements at the independent living units
- Variations in rooflines and massing with extensive use of overhangs to enhance the architectural character
- Street wall design to reduce perception of 5 storey massing
- Strong interface with the street through significant landscaping
- Strong entry feature and port-cochere
- Extensive use of glazing at ground level
- Providing interior space for use by the community (fitness, private lounge)

## Safety & Security

The safety and security of both the community and residents of the proposed development is of utmost importance, especially given the nature of the proposed development. The implementation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principals is multi-disciplinary approach to promoting community safety through the thoughtful and meaningful design of the environment. CPTED involves the balanced application of three basic principles, which are implemented in the proposed development:

### 1. Natural surveillance

Natural surveillance is created through the establishment of clear sightlines, enabling building occupants to monitor the surrounding environment. The proposed development offers the following natural surveillance concepts in the design:

- driveways and paths are oriented towards natural forms of surveillance such as building entrances and windows
- building entrances, stairwells, and access points receive increased visual permeability through the strategic use of windows, fencing, and landscaping
- pathways, internal sidewalks, and all concealed spaces will receive strategic lighting to prevent unwanted access
- highly-active interior spaces capable of generating activity are strategically located and augmented by the use of extensive sidewalks, outdoor seating areas and amenity spaces to promote continuous use

### 2. Natural Access Control

Natural access control aims to decrease crime opportunity. Forms of access control includes fences, low walls, landscaping, gates and any barrier that is natural for the environment including topographical features. Natural access control applications for the proposed development include:

- providing clear border definition of controlled space through the placement of fences, guardrails and obstructions
- limiting uncontrolled and/or unobserved access onto properties, buildings and private space

- using space to provide natural barriers to conflicting activities.

### 3. Territorial Reinforcement

Territorial reinforcement is a design concept that realizes that physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence so that users develop a sense of proprietorship that is noticeable to a potential offender. Natural surveillance and access control can help people to develop a sense of ownership about a space regardless of whether or not they own it and develop a sense of pride for a community. Territorial reinforcement applications for the proposed development include:

- creating clearly marked transitional zones as persons move from public to semi-public and private space through the use of paving patterns, signs and entry features
- providing amenities in communal areas that encourages activity and use throughout the day
- creating space that is inviting to the public and encourages public interaction
- creating a high quality building of which residents and community members can be proud
- implementing a visitor reporting procedures for entry into the building
- conducting timely maintenance that ensures building longevity

### **Transportation**

The proposed development is an assisted living facility, which offers significantly reduced parking and traffic requirements compared to other developments. The applicant team has discussed the parking requirements with the City and are proceeding with a parking requirement of 0.35 stalls/unit plus 0.1 visitor stalls/unit for the development. Proposed parking currently meets this requirement. The underground parkade is accessed off Birch Street while visitor parking is accessed for Ashgrove Street.

Based on market research and previous experience developing similar buildings, the vast majority of residents will neither drive nor own a car. Primary traffic generation will be a result of staff usage, however due to the location, it is anticipated that the majority of staff will make use of public transit.

### **Heritage**

There is no heritage status of the existing medical office building, however, through preliminary discussions with the NJNA, the applicant team understands the desire to maintain the Rod of Asclepius signage of the existing building. While a final design and location is not yet determined, the applicant team is committed to re-use the signage in order to recognize the history of the site.

### **Green Building Features**

With the recent implementation of the National Energy Code and the forthcoming decision on Step Code requirements, the applicant team is acutely aware of environmental considerations. While this level of design is not yet commenced, our team is committed to reviewing all aspects of sustainability and providing building systems in line with industry best practices. Sustainable items may include:

- Photovoltaic panels
- Increased mechanical and electrical efficiencies
- Increased building envelope systems and thermal performance
- Acoustic considerations
- Waste water reduction
- Storm water retention
- Passive solar systems
- Indigenous, low-water landscaping
- Decreased construction waste

## Infrastructure

While the detailed design of the building and tie-ins to the existing infrastructure have not yet been calculated, our preliminary review of the utilities indicates sufficient service to accommodate the proposed development. These calculations will be confirmed through the design process.

The proposed development is accommodating the City's required Statutory Rights-of-Ways (SRW's) and will work with the City and community to design inviting, and pedestrian-friendly interfaces along all public edges of the site.

We are excited about our proposed development and look forward to working with the Mayor and Members of Council to ensure this project is a vibrant addition to North Jubilee.

Sincerely,

**NORR Architects Engineers Planners**



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