

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Mayor Lisa Helps & Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square Victoria BC  
V8W 1P6

**RE: 902, 906, 910 McClure Street Rezoning and Development Permit Application**

Dear Mayor Helps and Council,

NumberTEN Architectural Group on behalf of Abigail's Hotel, is pleased to submit this application to rezone the properties at 902, 906, and 910 McClure Street, and to develop on the land at 910 McClure Street.

**THE PROPOSAL**

This application proposes rezoning 902 and 906 McClure Street from their current T-7 'Bessborough Transient Accommodation District' zone and 910 McClure Street from its current R-K 'Medium Density Attached Dwelling District' zone to a new site-specific zone that will accommodate the two existing hotel buildings and a new purpose built building with 8 additional guestrooms.

The new building will facilitate in increasing the existing number of guestrooms from 23 to 31, as well as increasing the existing parking count from 16 to 21. The addition will also provide a much needed new and large breakfast room for the Hotel. The addition will contain an accessible elevator and a new ramp linking the existing and new building, allowing the hotel to now accommodate guests requiring accessible features.

**BACKGROUND & NEED**

Abigail's is a 'boutique' bed and breakfast hotel in the Fairfield-Gonzales area of Victoria. It is currently an intimate 23-room property that is housed in a 1930's heritage Tudor mansion.

Originally built in the 1930's as a Tudor revival-style apartment building, Abigail's Hotel was previously known as "The Bessborough" apartments located at 906 McClure Street. The apartments were named after Vere Brabazon Ponsonby, ninth Earl of Bessborough, who was Governor General of Canada from 1931 until 1935. The building is derived from the half-timbered houses of the 16th and 17th centuries with irregular shapes, steeply pitched roofs, multi-paned windows and rough-hewn materials. The Bessborough was originally an eight-suite luxury apartment building.

In 1985 The Bessborough was completely renovated, converting it into a seventeen room bed and breakfast inn. The exterior had been restored to its original Tudor architecture and it was designated as a Heritage Building in the Historic Registry of the City of Victoria.

In 1998 the "Coach House" located at 902 McClure Street, was constructed alongside the main house with six luxury guestrooms.

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Abigail's Hotel also owns the property at 910 McClure Street, which neighbours the Heritage portion of the hotel at 906 McClure Street. It is currently zoned to R-K which allows for mostly single or two family homes, hospitals and nursing homes. There is an existing two storey house on the site, which is partially leased to a tenant and partially used by Abigail's Hotel as storage.

Abigail's Hotel is a thriving business which offers a unique and stunning experience to its guests, doing so for decades. It has been the recipient of numerous accolades and awards, namely being the #1 hotel in Victoria for 8 years running, in the top 3 Best Small Hotels in Canada, top 3 for Best Service in Canada and #1 most Romantic Hotel in Canada as rated by guests. Furthermore, it is also ranked in the top 10 five star hotels in Canada by Trivago, and in the top 3 for Booking.com .

It is no secret that Victoria is a city that hosts increasing numbers of visitors and tourists yearly. It is essential to provide a variety of accommodation types so its visitors can enjoy their stay at high quality establishments to their tastes and likes. Tourism Victoria noted in its 'Tourism Victoria 2017 Annual Report' that the occupancy of Victoria's Transient Accommodation is on the rise. In 2012, the occupancy rate sat at 62.1%, by 2015 it had risen to 70.2%, in 2016 it rose to 74.2% and in 2017 it reached 73.4%, with almost 2 million passengers arriving at YYJ airport in 2017.

Abigail's has and wishes to continue providing one of the best guest experiences in Victoria. Abigail's is responding to the growing demand by proposing to expand its current operations whilst simultaneously bettering the experience of its guests in adding features that will broaden capabilities and capacity.

## THE SITE

Located in a mixed residential neighbourhood, 902-910 McClure Street are very close to the Downtown, with convenient transit and walking access to many commercial, recreation and wellness services. Situated on the downtown periphery, the properties are ideally suited for purpose built, transient accommodation. The general site conditions are as follows:

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
SITE SIZE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 902 McCLURE STREET - 352.25 sq.m (3,791.6 sf)</li> <li>• 906 McCLURE STREET - 1,222.66 sq.m (6,482.7 sf)</li> <li>• 910 McCLURE STREET - 602.26 sq.m (6,482.7 sf)</li> </ul>
SITE TOPOGRAPHY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slopes from the North towards the South, where the property line meets McClure Street.</li> <li>• 4.46m (14.6ft) elevation difference from the highest point to the lowest point.</li> </ul>

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
KEY SITE CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains one 2 storey residential building with a single storey portion on the ground level.</li> <li>• There is a major holly tree in front of the building.</li> <li>• Due to the steep nature of the site there is a small concrete retaining wall at street level.</li> <li>• There are two large tree stumps at the rear of the site.</li> <li>• There are several smaller trees at the front of the site.</li> </ul>
SURROUNDING LAND USES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North - multi family residential apartments, Anglican Church, children's play park, Court House.</li> <li>• South - single family residential homes, multi-family residential apartments, Beacon hill Park.</li> <li>• East - single family residential homes, multi-family residential apartments</li> <li>• West - multi family residential apartments, Downtown Core</li> </ul>
CONNECTING ROADS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McClure Street ends in a turn around at the front of the sites. It is accessed via Vancouver Street from the east and abuts Quadra Street from the West.</li> <li>• The west part of the site fronts Quadra Street.</li> <li>• McClure Street is the major street for all of the sites.</li> </ul>

## LAND USE POLICY

We have ensured that the proposed building on 910 McClure Street meets many policy objectives of the City's Official Community Plan, and the Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan.

### Official Community Plan (OCP)

URBAN PLACE DESIGNATION – Urban Residential

BUILT FORM – Attached and detached buildings up to three storeys

PLACE CHARACTER FEATURES –

- Variable yard setbacks with primary doorways facing the street. Variable front yard landscaping, boulevard and street tree planting.
- On-street parking and collective driveway access to rear yard or underground parking.

USES –

- Ground oriented multi-unit residential. House conversions.
- Low to mid-rise multi-unit residential.
- Low to mid-rise mixed-use residential along arterial and secondary arterial roads.
- Home occupations.
- Visitor accommodation along Gorge Road and pre-existing locations.

DENSITY –

- Total floor space ratios generally up to 1.2 : 1

*Policy 6.23*

Generally support new development in areas designated Urban Residential that seeks densities toward the upper end of the range identified in Figure 8 where the proposal significantly advances the objectives in this plan and is:

- 6.23.1 within 200 metres of the Urban Core; or
- 6.23.2 within 200 metres of Town Centres or Large Urban Villages; or
- 6.23.3 along arterial or secondary arterial roads.

**BUILDINGS AND SITES –**

- 8.43 Encourage high quality architecture, landscape and urban design to enhance the visual identity and appearance of the City.
- 8.44 Support new infill and building additions that respond to context through sensitive and innovative design.
- 8.45 Encourage human scale in all building designs, including low, mid-rise and tall buildings, through consideration of form, proportion, pattern, detailing and texture, particularly at street level.
- 8.47 Encourage buildings adjacent to sidewalks and public plazas to maximize shop windows and entrances at ground level to support active land uses and provide interest for pedestrians throughout the Urban Core, Town Centres, and Urban Villages.
- 8.48 Integrate off-street vehicle parking in a way that does not dominate development or streetscapes.
- 8.49 Continue to support new additions that conserve and enhance heritage property, as consistent with the National Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.
- 8.50 Encourage new development to avoid the demolition of heritage property, or one or more of its facades.

**HERITAGE CONSERVATION**

- 8.51 Continue to give consideration to tools available under legislation to protect or conserve heritage property including, but not limited to: heritage designation bylaws; listing on the heritage register; temporary protection; heritage alteration permits; heritage revitalization agreements; design guidelines; and, the protection of views of heritage landmark buildings from public vantage points as identified in Map 8, and to be determined in future local area plans.
- 8.52 Continue to enable and support heritage conservation through incentives and allowances including, but not limited to: property tax reductions; grants; bonus density provision; and, zoning variances.
- 8.53 Require a heritage conservation plan, as appropriate, and heritage impact assessment, where relevant, for heritage alteration permits, heritage revitalization agreements, and rezonings for heritage properties.
- 8.54 Continue to work with senior government, community and business partners to identify, protect and conserve property of heritage value.
- 8.55 Continue to produce and update, as required, statements of significance for all property on the heritage register.

## TOURISM AND VISITOR SERVICES

- 14.30 Support the clustering of tourist and visitor services in the Inner Harbour and Urban Core by retaining and enhancing the mix of service, retail, offices, visitor accommodation and harbour transportation uses, and arts and cultural facilities.
- 14.31 Strengthen the appeal of Victoria to tourists and other visitors in ways that enhance the community including:
  - 14.31.1 Accessible transportation to and within the City;
  - 14.31.2 A high quality of amenities, services and events;
  - 14.31.3 An attractive and vibrant waterfront; and,
  - 14.31.4 Character areas in the Downtown and other neighbourhoods.
- 14.33 Continue to invest in the heritage character of the Downtown and other neighbourhoods through incentives for rehabilitation and seismic upgrades.
- 14.35 Work with regional, community and business partners to expand cycling and pedestrian pathways along high-demand routes to major destinations and increase the availability of bicycles for visitors.
- 14.36 Encourage the local tourism industry to position Victoria as a green and socially responsible visitor destination through the use of efficient, low emission fuels, carbon offsets, waste reduction, and similar initiatives.

### Fairfield Gonzales Neighbourhood Plan

The draft Fairfield neighbourhood was released in November 2017. Its Plan Vision identifies Fairfield as 'an inclusive, welcoming, safe and resilient neighbourhood steeped in beauty, heritage, and nature, and filled with connected people, vibrant community places, and strong local businesses'. It is grounded in four core principles, one of which is 'Ensuring economic viability: Fairfield's economy is robust and diverse, and supports local-serving businesses.' 902 -910 McClure Street sit within the 'Northwest' area. This area identifies one of its main goals as being to 'Create opportunities for more people to live close to downtown, jobs, amenities and transit.'

#### *6.1 Land Use and Urban Design*

- 6.1.1. Consider the maximum building heights of 20m, with approximately 5-6 storeys.
- 6.1.4. Consider development up to the base density of 1.2 : 1
- 6.1.8. New buildings should consider use of building elements and building designs that complement the surrounding area.
- 6.1.9. New buildings should be designed to provide a sensitive transition in scale to adjacent, smaller development through consideration for massing and other design features. Strategies to achieve this may include but are not limited to setting upper storey back, varying roof lines, increasing setbacks and siting and scaling buildings to reduce shading, etc.
- 6.1.11. Ensure that new development integrates attractive landscaping and building features that create attractive walking environments along adjacent streets.

- 6.2.1. Maintain and enhance the existing urban tree canopy on all streets to support attractive streetscapes and walkable environments.
- Explore the potential to redesign and transform McClure Street and Collinson Street as people-priority 'Living Streets' that include green features.

#### HERITAGE:

##### Goals:

1. Conserve the historic character of significant buildings and streets.
  2. Celebrate and interpret the heritage of the neighbourhood.
- 10.1.2. Work with community partners to identify and support strategies to build awareness and celebrate Fairfield's historic buildings, streets, landscapes and other special places, and ways to conserve them.

#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Over the last several months, Abigail's Hotel has made a concerted effort to engage with the surrounding neighbours and the City during the concept plan development process (see below). Written feedback received from these events is attached to this application.

November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2017	Meeting with City of Victoria Planner Alec Johnson and Senior Heritage Planner Merinda Conley
January 10 <sup>th</sup> 2018	Neighbourhood Open House Meeting at Abigail's Hotel (Neighbours along Burdett, McClure and Vancouver Street)
February 15 <sup>th</sup> 2018	Meeting with Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Land Use Committee (CALUC)
March 14 <sup>th</sup> 2018	Meeting with concerned neighbour and property owner, Donna Rhodes of 905 Burdett Avenue
April 12 <sup>th</sup> 2018	Community Meeting with the CALUC and neighbours within a 100m radius of the site.

Since the original concept drawing process began in late 2017, the design has evolved significantly to address issues and requests expressed by the City and by neighbours throughout the various consultation activities.

While changes in the design development have been informed by all of this feedback, we have been most diligent in observing comments made by the residents of 905 Burdett Avenue (the building immediately north of the properties). Their comments have inspired changes regarding the exterior lighting treatment to the rear of the site, have inspired the delicate approach to building height and the placement of prominent guestroom windows away from the views of the residents.

Other significant changes resulting from the conversations with neighbours and the City include:

- Pulling the building massing towards the rear of the site to allow the existing heritage building to be seen easily from McClure Street. This was requested by the City of Victoria's Senior Heritage Planner.
- The inclusion of an electrical vehicle parking stall.
- Varying the exterior trim detailing of the proposed building to make it distinctive from the heritage building.
- Working to maximize parking on site to limit the potential for crowding McClure Street on street parking.

## PLANNING & DESIGN PROCESS

### Building Design

The existing site at 910 McClure Street is the only of the three Abigail's sites that will be developed.

- The site has a relatively challenging terrain that includes more than a storey slope from the north to south.
- The adjacent building on the east side is a 2 storey residential building that sits tight to the east property line. The adjacent building to the west is the Heritage Designated main Abigail's Hotel building. It sits approximately 2.5m from the west property line.
- By massing the building with 4 floors, 3 storeys and a lower basement floor allows for a smaller footprint on site.
- The sloping roof elements, the green trim and stucco siding help to draw consistency between the existing heritage, coach house building and the proposed building.
- Use of matching multi-paned windows to further resonate with the building's heritage neighbour.
- The lower floor consists of the much-needed breakfast room, kitchen, and storage. Floors 2 and 3 show 3 guestrooms each, and the 4<sup>th</sup> floor has 2 guestrooms.
- The elevator provides necessary access to the hotel for disabled guests. The rooms will emulate those in the main and coach house, with matching windows and lower sloped ceilings.
- The 4<sup>th</sup> floor is concealed within the sloped roof. The height of the peak of the sloped roof will not exceed the height of the existing Abigail's Hotel building, in order to preserve the neighbour views to the Olympic mountain range and the ocean.

### Landscaping

Key elements of the landscape plan include:

- Preservation of prominent site trees along McClure Street, including two onsite trees and the existing boulevard tree.
- Installation of new planting to complement the existing planting along the existing Abigail's frontage.
- Introduction of 8 new deciduous trees on site.
- Perimeter fencing.

- Planter boxes on the patio.
- Wall mounted lights with full cut-off to aid in reducing light pollution to neighbours.
- Permeable pavers for parking stalls.
- Electrical vehicle charging stall available.
- Enclosed outdoor patio with permeable pavers.
- An enclosed and screened garbage and recycling area.

### Transportation & Parking

See below an analysis of the existing and proposed parking on site.

SITE	REQ'D UNDER CURRENT ZONE + SCHEDULE C	EXISTING	PROPOSED
902 McClure Street	0.5 stalls per guest room unit # of units - 6 Stalls req'd - 3	3 stalls	3 existing stalls to remain
906 McClure Street	0.7 stalls per guest room unit # of units - 17 Stalls req'd - 11.9 or 12 Per Schedule C for Transient Accommodation	13 stalls	12 existing stalls to remain
910 McClure Street	No less than 1.5 stalls per unit under zone R-K  0.7 stalls per guest room unit # of units - 8 Stalls req'd - 5.6 or 6 Per Schedule C for Transient Accommodation	2 (under R-K)  N/A	N/A  6 stalls
902, 906, 910 McClure Street	0.5 stalls per unit for Coach House (3) 0.7 stalls per unit for Main building for transient accommodation (12) 0.7 stalls per unit for Proposed building for transient accommodation (6)	N/A	21 stalls

Note that the proposed parking exceeds the requirements for parking under the proposed draft Schedule C, which requires a minimum of 0.5 per transient accommodation unit.

Of the 21 stalls available on site, one stall is designated as an accessible unit, and one stall is designated as an electrical vehicle parking stall, both responding to the increasing demand.

Under Schedule C, there is a requirement of 1 bike rack per 15 rooms plus one additional bike rack. We are providing 2 6 stall bike racks, one covered and one exposed.

Abigail's Hotel are considering an initiative in the future where they would purchase bicycles that the guests staying at hotel could use to explore the City of Victoria and surrounding areas.

The sites are close in proximity to four bus stops, 2 on Richardson Street and 2 on Fairfield Street. The BC Transit routes served at these bus stops are routes 1 and 7. Each stop is approximately a 5-



minute walk from the sites. However due to their location, the sites are within great walking distance of the Downtown core, taking roughly 10 minutes to walk to the BC Ferries bus connection and Island Link buses, and 15 minutes to the Inner Harbour.

### Neighbourhood Impacts

The siting and design of the building are specifically intended to minimize impacts on neighbours. Shadow studies demonstrate that with the proposed setbacks and careful siting there is minimal shadowing on neighbouring buildings for the majority of the year except at the winter solstice when the sun is at its lowest, and even then the shadowing is minimal.

We have carefully oriented the guestrooms to avoid overlook and ensure privacy for both guests and neighbours, with the main guestroom windows facing south, with minor bathroom or corridor windows facing east and west. The major windows that face north do not directly look onto any neighbouring building. The inclusion of 1.8m high fencing and tall planting help to create a visual buffer and screen the views to and from the site.

Access to the proposed building for guests will primarily be through the main hotel entrance, where guests will check and be directed to the new building via the walkway. There will be a secure gate and fencing around the outdoor patio to allow limited exterior access to the patio and breakfast room.

### Green Building Features

Abigail's Hotel will meet the BC Energy Step Code, Step 1. In addition, Abigail's will be attempting where possible to implement many sustainable and green features. The key features will include:

- The sustainable and thoughtful demolition and disposal of the existing building at 910 McClure Street through a Construction Waste Management Plan.
- Creation of a cycling initiative for guests as well as ample bike storage facilities to encourage both staff and guests to travel to and from the hotel via bicycle.
- The project includes the minimum of on-site parking required.
- The use of permeable surfaces for open site space and parking stalls.
- The preservation of key site trees and the addition of 8 new site trees.
- The use of native and adaptive planting on site.
- LED exterior lighting fixtures.
- The final determination for the heating system has not yet been confirmed, but energy efficiency is one of the main selection criteria.

Infrastructure

A site servicing plan has not yet been completed but it is the assumption that there will be no servicing issues anticipated with the proposed development as its size and needs are not excessive in comparison to the infrastructure currently available to the site.

**IN CLOSING**

The City of Victoria has long been growing in popularity both as a place to settle into a unique and fulfilling life, and as a place to visit, relax and enjoy as a tourist. Abigail's Hotel has the unique opportunity of facing a positive, growing tourism future whilst having the ability and desire to expand its operations. The rezoning and development of their properties at 902, 906 and 910 McClure Street will meet the demand for transient accommodation and aid in growing an established and reputable local business.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned (250 360 2106 ext 5211, [bcosgrave@numberten.com](mailto:bcosgrave@numberten.com)). If any additional information is needed relating the hotel operations, please contact Allison Fairhurst, General Manager of Abigail's Hotel (250 388 5363 [allison@abigailshotel.com](mailto:allison@abigailshotel.com)).

Sincerely,



Barry Cosgrave, Architect AIBC, MRAIC, LEED AP

Attachs.

cc. ShuHua Pei, Steve Chang, Allison Fairhurst – of Abigail's Hotel