



September 25, 2020

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

Attention: Mayor Lisa Helps and Council

**RE: Development Permit Application & Development Rationale
Mixed Use Commercial | Rental Residential Building
610, 618-624 Herald Street & 611-635 Chatham Street
Old Town, Victoria, BC**

Dear Mayor Helps and Members of Council:

Further to our prior discussions and consultation with Development Services, we herewith submit this development permit application, development rationale letter, and related attachments in support of a Development Permit ("DP") for the above referenced properties.

The purpose of the DP application is to allow the development of a mixed-use building consisting of underground parking, commercial space at grade, and four storeys of purpose-built, secured market rental residential apartments consistent with the vision for the Old Town District and the OTD-1 zoning.

Introduction

The subject property is in Old Town at the northern boundary of the downtown core / Chinatown / Rock Bay neighbourhoods. It is in immediate vicinity of the future Innovation District as proposed in the City of Victoria's draft economic action plan Victoria 3.0. The property faces Chatham to the north, Herald to the south, and Government Street to the west. The property is approximately 1.5-acres in area and is comprised of nine legal lots that are zoned Old Town District-1 suitable for mixed-use residential/commercial use.

The property is currently occupied by a parking lot that straddles the property from Chatham to Herald; a small commercial building on Herald; an automotive service centre (Fountain Tire) at the corner of Government & Herald; and a vacant commercial building on Chatham.

Based on pre-application discussions and meetings with Development Services, we understand the proposed form of development is supportable. The attached submission reflects our discussions with Staff to date.

Development Rationale

The proposed development will provide a 194,150 square foot (18,037 m²) mixed-use development consisting of 1-½ levels of underground parking, ground floor commercial space, approximately 274 purpose-built, secured market rental apartments in two 5-story buildings, and a landscaped central courtyard designed for the enjoyment of the future residents. The development will provide much needed rental apartments for the community, secured by a legal agreement with the City, and is a direct response to rental vacancy in Victoria of 1.6%. The resulting development program and building form was a collaborative effort between our design team and Staff.

The property is zoned Old Town District-1 that permits residential and commercial uses on the ground floor. The maximum permitted FSR is 3.0 and the maximum permitted height is 15m. A height variance will be required for the 5-storey buildings, which is supportable per recent and past approvals, and the objectives contained in the Official Community Plan and the Old Town Design Guidelines. A separate request is attached to this rationale for Council consideration.

The commercial component will provide approximately 19,610 square feet (1,822 m²) of ground floor space that will animate the street edge on all three street frontages. The commercial space will feature a range of retail unit sizes and a 'feature' unit at the corner of Government & Herald Streets.

The residential component will provide approximately 140,300 square feet (13,034 m²) of upper floor apartments consisting of a mix of studios (52%), 1 bedroom (32%) and 2 bedroom (16%) homes. All apartments will have a patio, balcony or "Juliette" balcony, and all residents will have access to an interior landscaped courtyard located between the two principal buildings. All apartment units and floors will be accessible via an elevator from central lobbies located at the Chatham and Herald entrances, and the underground parking lot. The building features amenity rooms (available to all residents), mail rooms (with secure parcel drop-off), an office for a resident building manager, service/locker rooms, and amenitized bicycle parking.

The development will appeal to tech workers, young professionals, empty nesters, and government workers seeking an urban living experience with convenient access to the downtown core, restaurants, bars, shops, and services that are all within walking distance.

The proposed development is consistent with the Old Town Design Guidelines and the objectives of the core historic Development Permit Areas. The efficient unit design translates into a strong urban age, while the façade is articulated using proportions, patterns and elements that complement the neighbourhood. The animated ground floor commercial spaces will also contribute to the integration with the neighbourhood.

The parking calculation is based on the ratios for secured market rental per Schedule C of the Parking Bylaw.

The development is based on our urban development experience and we believe it achieves a balance of residential unit types for a variety of tenants, site coverage, massing, parking, and overall design.



Site and Building Design

There is an elevation grade drop of approximately 3 metres from Herald to Chatham Street to the north. Taking advantage of this grade difference, a common vehicle/loading/service access is located from Chatham Street allowing for an efficient underground parking structure.

The proposed development has a gross floor area of 194,150 square feet (18,037 m²) at 2.97 FSR, consistent with the permitted FSR per the zoning bylaw. The apartments are distributed in two buildings with street access from Herald Street and Chatham Street respectively. The buildings will be constructed in compliance with the BC Step Code, with Step 2 for the commercial space and Step 3 for the apartment units.

Please refer to the Design Rationale as prepared by Integra Architecture and LADR Landscape Architects for more information.

Unit Size and Mix

The proposed development contains a mix of studios, 1, and 2 bedroom units ranging in size from 334 square feet (31 m²) to 842 square feet (78 m²). The unit breakdown is as follows:

- Studio 143 Units – 52%
- 1-Bedroom 87 Units – 32%
- 2-Bedroom 44 Units – 16%

Neighbourhood Amenities

The location of the property in Old Town and adjacent to Chinatown will provide a generous range of neighbourhood amenities for the future residents of the development.

- Walkable neighbourhood with existing shops and services
- Many employment opportunities available throughout the downtown core
- Access to transit
- Proximity to:
 - sports fields (Royal Athletic Park)
 - library (Greater Victoria Public Library)
 - restaurants (many options in the downtown core)
 - shopping (many options in the downtown core)
 - grocery (Victoria Public Market, Fisgard Market, Chinatown)
 - culture & heritage (Chinatown, Old Town)
 - the future Innovation District

Building Amenities

A host of on-site amenities are under consideration for the development including:

- communal courtyard space with social spaces, gardens
- bike parking with amenities (i.e. workshop, bike wash)
- pet friendly living



- secure parcel delivery service
- in suite laundry
- storage lockers or in-suite storage (including seasonal storage options)
- media/game room
- social gathering/co-working space that connects with the street and main lobby
- secure keyless fob access to building and suites
- EV charging stations
- energy efficient appliances

In closing, the proposed development is consistent with and complements the neighbourhood. Inspired by Old Town, the building design will respect the scale and modularity in a contemporary building to create a unique offering while increasing the supply and diversity of market rental housing, contributing to the infill and intensification of the downtown core, and integrating with the neighbourhood.

Respectfully submitted,

Denciti Development Corp. acting on behalf of
Nicola Herald Limited Partnership



David A. Fawley
Principal



Guadalupe Font
Development Manager

Copies: Miko Betanzo, Senior Planner, Urban Design
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S. Watt; Integra
B. Windjack; LADR
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/attachments

