



Christine Lintott
Architects



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The City of Victoria
Attention: Mayor and Council
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

RE: 2713 Quadra Street, Development Permit with Variance Application

On behalf of our client, Eight Diamond Holdings Ltd., and their prospective tenant, the Victoria Academy of Ballet, we are pleased to submit for your consideration an application for Development Permit with Variance for the refurbishment and renewal of the existing building located at 2713 Quadra Street.

The renewal envisions a lively arts tenancy that welcomes multi-aged students to a recreational and professional Ballet Academy setting. Interior spaces will be reconfigured to facilitate optimal light and studio spaces on the main and second level, while also providing generous administrative and student lounge spaces throughout. This proposed tenancy will breath new life into an existing building, along with contributing a positive arts and cultural venue to the growing vibrancy of the Quadra Village District.

Please consider our application in the context of the information provided below, in addition to our complete submission and supporting documentation.

Description of Proposal

The project site at 2713 Quadra Street is bounded by Quadra Street on the West, a neighboring commercial property on the north, a parking lot on the east, and a neighboring commercial property (and driveway) to the south. The proposal includes the following:

- Refurbishment of the existing Quadra Street frontage with the re-grading/re-surfacing of the existing surface parking lot, with consolidation of the vehicle stalls, the addition of bicycle parking adjacent to the building entrance, and a new pedestrian pathway to link the building entrance to the public sidewalk;
- Renovation of the existing two-storey concrete block building to accommodate three significant dance studios, administrative spaces and supporting facilities for the Academy, with associated refurbishment of the street elevation to accommodate new fenestration and signage, and a raising of a portion of the existing roof to support the activity of dance.

Project Benefits and Amenities

The application is consistent with the use, density and height allowed in the zoning designation of C1-QV, Quadra Village District, and requests a variance for on-site parking spaces that are to be provided. The Victoria Academy of Ballet attracts a diverse clientele of youth and families committed to the study and celebration of the performing arts within the Greater Victoria Region. This proposed building revitalization responds and contributes to Quadra's Large Urban Village Designation by providing a commercial service, while enhancing the public realm and interface along Quadra Street. The proposed Ballet Studio tenancy will enliven the Quadra Street frontage and will incorporate landscape buffering and a new pedestrian walkway from Quadra Street towards the proposed street-level building entrance.

Requested Variances

In order to accommodate the proposed tenancy, a variance is being requested for the number of parking spaces required and their location in the property's front yard. Watt Consulting Group was retained to undertake an assessment of the proposed tenancy and the implications relative to the location within a Large Urban Village and the City of Victoria's sustainable transportation objectives. Their report is attached.

To summarize the request, the parking variance is a reduction from the Schedule C off-street parking regulation requirement of 35 vehicle parking stalls, to 7, with all stalls being located in the existing parking lot in the front yard of the property, accessed directly off Quadra Street. The anticipated market demand for parking generated by the proposed tenancy will be met through the following strategies: increasing on-site bicycle parking, encouraging use of existing, well-serviced public transportation, utilizing available parking at adjacent properties, and potential car-share initiatives.

Neighbourhood

The proposed tenancy is located within the Large Urban Village designation of the Hillside Quadra area. The site is accessed from Quadra Street. Neighboring buildings include existing low-rise commercial, multi-unit residential, and mixed-use buildings along both Quadra Street (North and South), and Hillside Avenue (East and West).

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

The proposed tenancy is consistent with the strategic direction described in the City's Official Community Plan for this district which is to "build complete communities...by supporting growth in and within 500m of Major Centres; services and recreation and locating new growth within 400m of transit routes". The proposed tenancy re-uses an existing and vacant commercial building and is consistent with the Large Urban Village Designation. More specifically:

- "further develop Quadra Village as a complete Large Urban Village with increased commercial density, community and commercial services, and additional public realm enhancements";
- "ground-oriented commercial and community services that reinforce the sidewalk, and one to three storey building facades define the street wall";
- "low to mid-rise commercial uses";
- "total floor space ratios generally up to 1.5:1".

Referencing the above noted guidelines, the following design principles and concepts have been applied to this project:

- the proposal falls within the total FSR (up to 1.5:1) with a density of 1:1;
- the design and layout of the proposal falls within the design guidelines in being a ground-oriented, mid-rise, two-storey, community service organization that fosters health and wellness;
- connections to the surrounding streets include access to Quadra Street, and Hillside Avenue.

Transportation

Please refer to Requested Variance Section (above) for Transportation issues related to this application, as well as the attached parking study prepared by Watt Consulting Group.

Green Building Considerations

The proposed tenancy encompasses a building retention and re-use and seeks alternative transportation initiatives in support of a proposed parking variance. Renovation will result in a significant improvement in building energy efficiency, while ensuring that the existing embodied energy and sequestered carbon are retained through strategic planning of the proposed alterations.

Infrastructure

The existing building is currently serviced along Quadra Street and will utilize existing sanitary, storm and water services. A natural gas service is proposed to be installed along the south corner of the building face, along the Quadra Street site entrance.

Summary

The proposed tenancy for this existing building encompasses reconfiguring the interior spaces and exterior façade upgrades, including a roof pop-up within the zoning height allowance. The proposed tenancy aligns with the City of Victoria's intent and plan to increase commercial density, community services, and an enhanced public realm within the Quadra Village District. A parking variance, related to the number and location of vehicle parking stalls, is requested to enable these aspirations to proceed.

Extensive public and neighbourhood consultations are underway and will continue as the processing of this application proceeds. We look forward to sharing this input.

Sincerely,



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