

February 7, 2019

Leanne Taylor
Senior Planner
City of Victoria
City Hall
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6



Dear Leanne,

Re: Application for Rezoning and Development Permit; 1100 & 1120 Yates Street; 1109, 1115 Johnson St.

In response to the Application Review Summary dated January 8, 2019, Proscenium Architecture + Interiors Inc. has prepared an itemized list of changes and bullet point responses on behalf of, and in coordination with, Chard Development Ltd.

Description of Changes

The proposed development has continued to progress in design and the City staff comments have been helpful to shape that development. Other influences on the proposal have been the completion of the geotechnical report with associated seismic impacts, and further study of the unit sizes.

The major changes are as follows (Revision numbers correspond to the bubbled drawing set):

- Parkade has been reconfigured to minimize excavation depth. (Rev 1)
- The 8-storey tower has been reshaped slightly for more liveable units. (Rev 2)
- The garbage for the 8-storey tower has been moved to the P1 level to improve the central area. (Rev 3)
- The child care space within the 12-storey tower has been reconfigured to avoid the large overhang deck and reduced in size to meet market demand from smaller-scale, local child care providers. Commercial office space has been added to the 12-storey tower to meet expressed demand for addition medical office space. (Rev 4)
- The residential and commercial garbage areas within the 12-storey tower have been consolidated for less impact to the central pedestrian space and an overhead gate added. (Rev 5)
- The 6-storey building has been flipped to have the larger family-oriented units face the green space. (Rev 6)
- The 6- and 8-storey buildings have been modified to have more of a townhouse look. (Rev 7)
- The central pedestrian space has been reconfigured for better circulation and use and a midblock walkway has been added from Johnson St. (Rev 8)
- The amenity roof deck has been removed from the 12-storey tower and the planters brought down to the ground level for better animation and to reduce the height of the elevator over runs. (Rev 9)
- Bicycle parking has been moved from the lower levels of the parkade to the P1 level and the end of trip facility has been moved to the basement of the existing medical building. (Rev 10)

Responses to City Comments

General Comments

The OCP strongly encourages the logical assembly of development sites and discourages the orphaning of lots. To that end, staff strongly encourage the inclusion of 1321-1329 Cook Street into the proposal or at a minimum identify how this property could be developed or integrated into the scheme at a later date.

- *To address the potential for future development at 1321-1329 Cook Street, additional drawings have been provided. These include a knockout panel at P1 of the proposed development to allow for future below grade parking access as well as conceptual massing of a future building that would be possible given this parking condition. See separate drawing sheet C00.*

The application is subject to a Land Lift Analysis prepared by a third-party consultant.

- *A Land Lift Analysis is currently underway.*

The section on blended density in the letters to Mayor and Council is a bit confusing and slightly inaccurate. The OCP does not contemplate a blended density. The letter can refer to an overall density for the site as a whole; however, the site is further subdivided into three lots each with its proposed density. Please update the letter to Mayor and Council.

- *Both letters have been updated and clarified.*

Please provide more information on the phasing of the development.

- *The development is contemplated in two phases. The 12-storey market building and the 8-storey affordable building will be constructed in tandem and will be completed and operational before commencement of the 6-storey rental. This will allow for continued access to on-site parking for the Victoria Professional Building for the duration of construction. Renovations to the Victoria Professional Building will be part of the first phase.*

In the letter to Mayor and Council, it mentions that there is a willingness to underground wiring. Please confirm if this will be secured in a legal agreement.

- *In terms of existing and proposed utility infrastructure, it is the intention to support the City of Victoria in a beautification application to BC Hydro to underground the existing pole mounted hydro services located along Yates for the area of the site. In addition, a Sewer Attenuation Study has been completed and has confirmed that sewer attenuation is not required for this proposal.*

The bicycle and vehicle parking calculations in the Traffic Impact Assessment are incorrect. Please refer to the Plan Check for the correct parking calculations and revise the report accordingly. Table 4.2 Vehicle Parking Supply Required should be further refined by providing parking calculations for each lot.

- *Parking calculations and report have been updated.*

Parking variances are required to facilitate this development. A legal agreement will be required to secure parking for the office building on the adjacent lot.

- *The parking situated below the 12-storey and 8-storey developments will include an easement in favour of the Victoria Professional Building. The table 4.2 has been revised accordingly.*

Given that the mews traverses three properties (different strata and property owners), please provide more information on the type of legal agreement that will be in place to ensure this space is maintained over long-term.

- *The mews area that intersects all sites at the ground plane will have a reciprocal access agreement with a shared facility agreement to cover costs, maintenance and upkeep requirements. Mechanisms will be in place to transfer these agreements should these properties have a change of ownership.*

Please ensure all building materials are labelled on the elevation plans, including the soffit material.

- *Elevations have been updated.*

Site Planning

Providing a pedestrian-oriented open space is strongly encouraged in the design guidelines and an asset to this proposal. The buildings need to frame this open site space from an architectural perspective and provide active uses (not back of house activities) at ground level that encourage spill out activity (buildings should be connected and integrated with pedestrian-oriented spaces). All four sides of each new building are visible from the public realm and require special attention. Design revisions are strongly encouraged.

Staff strongly encourage the relocation of the loading/service area for the 12 storey building to be relocated below grade.

- *Loading below grade has been investigated, but due to the heights required and grading to achieve those heights it is not feasible without significant negative impact to the plaza area.*

The garbage room for the 8-storey development has been moved below grade and has opened up the central pedestrian space. A letter from the waste hauler detailing access and service agreements is attached.

The residential and commercial garbage for the 12-storey development has been combined to reduce the footprint and allow the loading bay to move further south and expand the pedestrian area. An overhead door has also been added to clean up the loading area and provide security when the loading is not in use.

The internal area, featuring the play area, dog relief and loading should be reconsidered with respect to proximity to each other, potential conflicts and shadowing. Staff note that the dog relief area appears to have the least shadowing impacts during the summer months.

- *This area has been reassessed and the dog area has been moved to the east side of the site. The internal area has been enlarged and improved with the changes noted above.*

Overall pedestrian permeability of the site is very important. To that end, a comprehensive look at how the site may be experienced by “passers-by” and those hoping to travers the site is warranted and the use of gates, fences should be minimized and where proposed, greater detail is required. Please reconsider and identify on the landscape plan.

- *Pedestrian permeability has been reassessed and an additional connection from Johnson St has been proposed to allow greater permeability of the interior block. Further details have been provided regarding the security strategy and have been identified on the landscape plans.*

Please provide rationale for the siting of buildings and how they address privacy impacts of adjacent residential uses and private open spaces.

- *The buildings have been situated to respond to the context of the neighbourhood and the zoning as it steps from the downtown core to the lower residential. The 12-storey building is situated at the south west corner to anchor the corner of the development and limit shadow impact on adjacent properties. The 8- and the 6-storey buildings respond to the smaller scale of Johnson St and provide a gradual step down from Cook St towards the east. The buildings have been separated and offset as much as possible to provide privacy between buildings. The 8 and 6 storey have good separation; the distance between the 12 and the 8 storey buildings is mitigated by their offset locations. Privacy between the medical building and the 6 storey is mitigated by limiting the fenestration on the south façade of the 6 storey. Additionally the landscape has been considered to provide additional privacy for the ground-level family-oriented units.*

Please provide more detailed renderings showing how the proposed buildings relate to each other and fit into the neighbourhood context.

- *Additional context views have been included on sheet A502.*

Provide building separation distances on the site plan and elevation plans.

- *Due to the size of the site and variations by floor, distances between buildings are shown on the overall plans for each level. Additional dimensions are on the site plan and elevations.*

Please ensure the connections between buildings and the public outdoor space are accessible.

- *The additional pedestrian connection from Johnson St to the interior block is designed as an accessible path at 5% grade. Due to the slope across the site we feel this is the best solution to preserve as much interior plaza space as possible while providing an easily traversable path.*

Twelve Storey Building (Market Condo)

Please consider relocating the garbage and recycling room to the underground parkade. This will allow for other uses at ground level that offer a more pedestrian-friendly and activated space. This will also reduce the width of driveway and allow for more landscaping and play area on-site.

- *The height for a full garbage truck and/or loading vehicle would require a much longer ramp opening into the site which would compromise the central plaza. The garbage room for the 8-storey building has been moved to below grade with a waste strategy for servicing this location.*

Reduce the height of the mechanical room to lessen its prominence and bulkiness. The building is considered a thirteen-storey building due to the mechanical room (exterior access).

- *The rooftop of the 12-storey building has been revised and limited to mechanical use. The elevator overrun has been reduced accordingly and the massing has been reduced as much as possible to lessen its impact.*

Please consider further stepping back the upper storeys to reduce the bulkiness of the upper storeys. This is particularly important given that the policy only supports eight storeys in this location.

- *The 12-storey building reinforces the street edge at the podium levels and steps back above. The step at the upper level responds to the development potential across Cook St with a height that is not so significantly different as an 8 storey building would be and we feel creates a better urban condition. At 12 stories the proportions of the building become compressed and unflattering if additional steps are added that break up the form. Further, the building as designed – with minimal setbacks – is superior from an environmental perspective, limiting thermal breaks and thereby improving the energy efficiency of the building.*

Please add additional commercial entryways along the Cook Street frontage in case the large Commercial Retail Unit (CRU) is divided into smaller CRUs.

- *An additional entry has been added to the CRU along Cook St. The grading is gentle enough to allow other locations for future doors if required.*

Please provide some programming on the rooftop patio (i.e. outdoor seating and tables, etc.). Please consider increasing the number of garden plots for the residents in the building. Please ask the Landscape Architect to include the rooftop patio on the plans and provide landscaping details.

- *See notes above.*

Units are mislabelled (one-bedroom units are labelled two-bedrooms) on the floor plans.

- *The updated plans have been corrected.*

Please double check the floor plans and elevation plans to ensure window placements are consistent.

- *The updated plans have been checked for consistency.*

All bicycle storage rooms must be located above the parking level 2.

- *Bicycle rooms have been relocated to the P1 level. The end of trip facility for the medical building has also been relocated to the P1 level in the basement of the existing building.*

Ensure all short-term bicycle parking is located on-site.

- *Short term bicycle parking has been revised.*

Eight-storey Building (Below Market Condos)

The residential uses fronting the street and mews must have strong entry features (front doors) that encourage interaction with the street and courtyard space. Please enhance and accentuate the ground level and second storey (look and feel of townhouse units) and a more engaged streetscape. The building appears quite dark and heavy at ground level.

- *The ground level has been revised to include massing articulation corresponding to a townhouse look and feel and increased interaction with the street and interior block.*

Incorporate architectural elements, accent materials and further articulation to break up the massing on all four sides of the building.

- *In conjunction with the modifications above to create a more townhouse look, the massing has been revised to provide greater articulation along the faces of the building.*

Rooftop mechanical room must be integrated with the architectural treatment of the building and not a prominent feature of the roof.

- *The mechanical rooftop enclosure has been modified with further input from our mechanical consultant. It has been sized to allow for equipment sufficient to meet the new energy step code and kept centred in the floorplate to minimize visual impacts from street level. The cladding materials have been revised to be better integrated with the overall look of the building.*

Six-Storey Building (Market Rental)

The residential uses fronting the street and mews must have strong entry features (front doors) that encourage interaction with the street and courtyard space. Please enhance and accentuate the ground level and second storey (look and feel of townhouse units) and a more engaged streetscape. The building appears quite dark and heavy at ground level.

- *The ground level has been revised to include massing articulation corresponding to a townhouse look and feel and increased interaction with the street and interior block.*

Please redesign the ground floor to improve the liveability of the dwelling units overlooking the ramp to the underground parkade. Please consider locating the two-bedroom units (family-friendly units as indicated in the letter to Mayor and Council) on the west side of the building with access to private outdoor space.

- *The two-bedroom units have been moved to face the west side of the building with larger patios as family-friendly units. The drive aisle width has been reduced to allow larger balconies and greenery on the east side facing the ramp.*

Incorporate architectural elements, accent materials and further articulation to break up the massing on all four sides of the building.

- *In conjunction with the modifications above to create a more townhouse look, the massing has been revised to provide greater articulation along the faces of the building.*

Rooftop mechanical room must be integrated with the architectural treatment of the building and not a prominent feature of the roof.

- *The mechanical rooftop enclosure has been modified with further input from our mechanical consultant. It has been sized to allow for equipment sufficient to meet the new energy step code and kept centred in the floorplate to minimize visual impacts from street level. The cladding materials have been revised to be better integrated with the overall look of the building.*

In summary, we believe we have addressed all of the comments provided in the Application Review Summary. Please let me know should you have any additional questions.

Yours truly,

PROSCENIUM Architecture + Interiors Inc.



Hugh Cochlin, Architect AIBC, AAA, MRAIC, LEED™ AP
Principal

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