

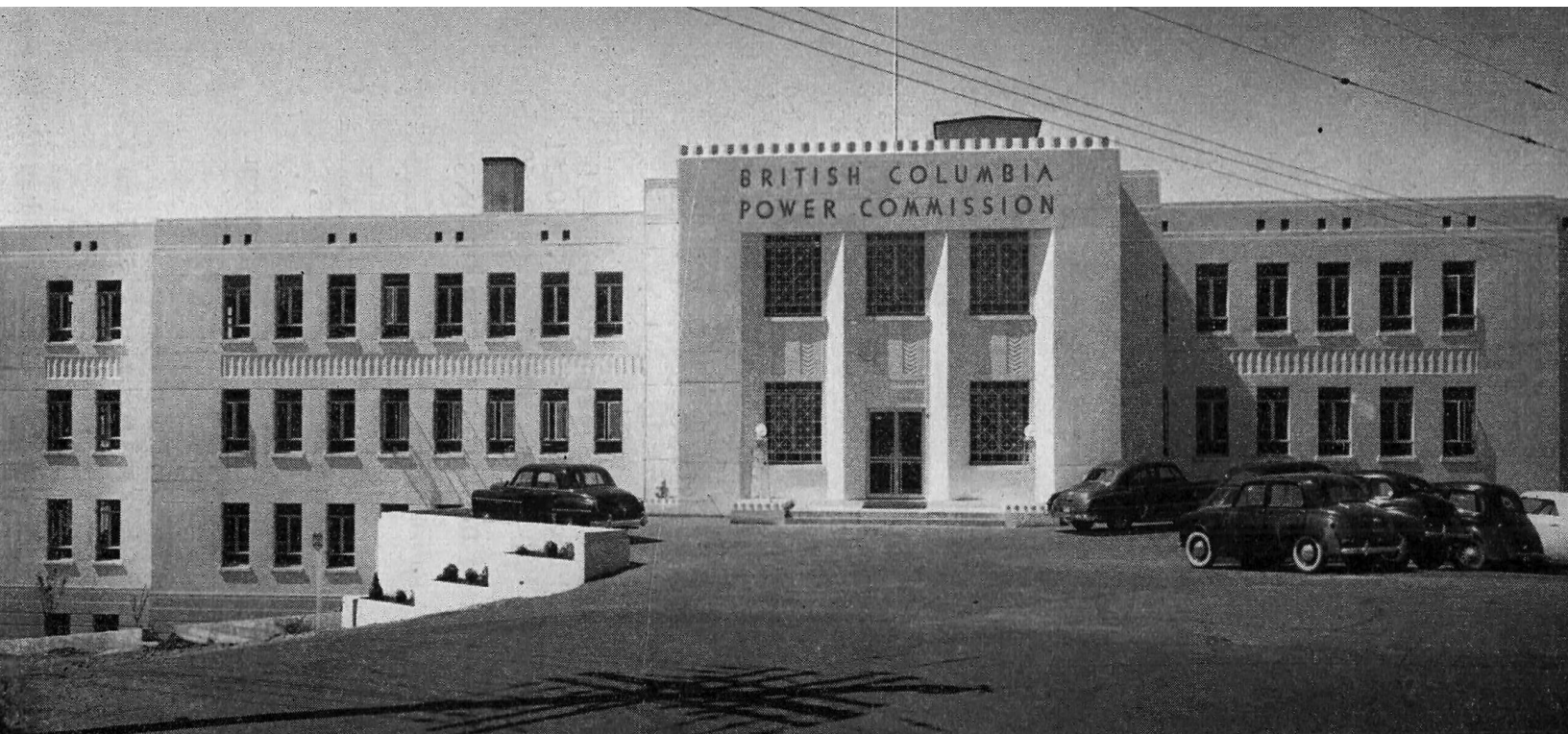
780 Blanshard Street

Rezoning Application

Letter to Mayor and
Council

City of Victoria

June 21, 2022





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architects + designers

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June 21, 2022

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

Re: **Rezoning Application for a Comprehensive Development Urban Design Plan at 780 Blanshard Street**

Dear Mayor Helps and Council:

The Office of McFarlane Biggar Architects + Designers (**omb**), on behalf of Reliance Properties, is pleased to present this letter and enclosed documents to describe this rezoning concept for 780 Blanshard Street, legally described as lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 28, and 29 of section 88 and of lot 1627, Christ Church Trust Estate, Victoria, Plan 35B. The goal of this project is to rehabilitate, and ultimately designate, the existing heritage building (the BC Power Commission Building), revitalize the site and its surroundings, and construct a new addition to the heritage structure. A mixed-use program is proposed, with a new 77-room hotel being installed within the renovated heritage building and 102 new dwelling units in the addition above.

Site Context

The 2,272 m² site is unique in the city. It is a steeply sloping triangular 'island' lot with no abutting private property lines. The site is bordered by three streets: Blanshard Street on the east, Burdett Avenue on the north, and Fairfield Road along the NW-SE axis. Immediately adjacent to the west is a small municipal park, Penwill Green, which is contiguous with the landscape of the site. The most prominent feature of the site is the British Columbia Power Commission Building, a late Art Deco-styled cast-in-place concrete structure designed by BC Public Works Architect Henry Whittaker in the late 1940s. Construction was completed in 1950 and the building subsequently functioned continuously for public sector use until vacated in April 2020.

Vision + Goals

The intention for this project is to revitalize an important existing site within downtown Victoria in a way which makes the most of its opportunities and addresses its challenges with a thoughtful, responsible, sensitive, and viable approach. The team envisions a new development that: restores an important heritage building, strengthens the urban network, improves the surrounding public realm, renews the adjacent municipal park, provides significantly expanded public transit infrastructure, and ultimately helps create a more vibrant, resilient, and diverse community.

This proposal is informed by several significant opportunities, including the chance to:

- Rehabilitate an important heritage structure, and to install a new program which brings the public and visitors into the building in a way they were not able to in the past.
- Respond to the unique characteristics of the site and urban context in a way that meaningfully enhances the utility, character, and social importance of the heritage building and surrounding public realm.
- Extend and enhance the mobility infrastructure on the site and its immediate surroundings to create an “urban mobility hub.”
- Infuse more housing choice within the downtown core to address current and future needs.
- Establish new connections between the building, its precinct, and the street for a vibrant dialog between the public realm and the heritage building.

Conversely, the site has several constraints and challenging conditions to consider in redevelopment. These include:

- The challenge of creating a sensitive and compelling addition to the heritage building that balances programmatic demands, urban design considerations, policy goals, and financial realities.
- The scale of the public realm improvements needed improve and revitalize the ‘urban island’ site with three frontages and the interconnected relationship with the under-utilized Penwill Green park.
- The constraints imposed by the skewed relationship of the existing building to the streets and property lines, the geometry of the site, and the sloped topography (approximately 8m from the Blanshard Street entrance to the sidewalk along Fairfield Road). These create significant challenges for site design, architectural response, and conformance to existing zoning bylaws and design guidelines.
- The inability to provide any significant on-site parking while also retaining the existing heritage building.

Based on an analysis of the heritage building and site history, the urban design considerations, and planning and policy context, the team developed a set of emerging principles to guide the design decision making. Building on the principles in combination with the opportunities and constraints presented by the site, several design concepts are proposed which form the core of the overall proposal. These principles and concepts are illustrated as follows:

Emerging Principles

Support Urban Vitality
Design to Complement + Enhance
Build on Unique Character
Strengthen the Urban Network
Respond to Ecology + Climate
Increase Safety + Inclusion



Design Concepts

Renew Penwill Green
Create a Blanshard Street Plaza
Redefine Burdett Avenue
Renew the Heritage Building
Connect a Multi-Modal Hub
Complement Housing with Active Uses
Activate Street Frontages
Realize Landmark Potential



Conceptual image looking across Blanshard Street toward the corner of Burdett Avenue

The Architecture

Conceived as a comprehensive heritage rehabilitation and complementary contemporary addition, the design proposal aims to achieve several goals:

- Retain and enhance the existing character of the site.
- Execute thoughtful architecture that is complementary to the heritage building, its immediate neighbours, and the city.
- Develop an urban design which transforms the public realm around the property to better activate the street and welcome people to and around the site.
- Install a mixed-use program that aligns with the employment, housing, and tourism goals of the city. And,
- Create a potential landmark at an inflection point in the city.

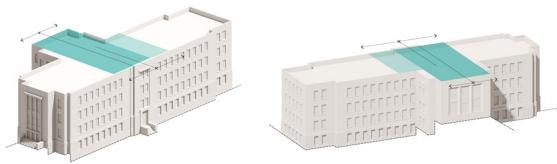
The point of departure for the architectural design is the guidance on the rehabilitation of historic buildings (Standards 10, 11, and 12) offered in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*. In general, these guidelines instruct to:

- Repair rather than replace character-defining elements.
- Conserve heritage value and character-defining elements when creating any new additions to an historic place or any related new construction. Make the new work physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the historic place. And,
- Create any new additions or related new construction so that the essential form and integrity of an historic place will not be impaired if the new work is removed in the future.

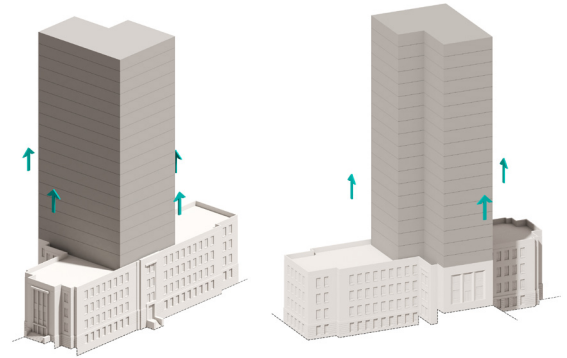
The rehabilitation of the BC Power Commission building is detailed in a conservation plan prepared by the heritage consultant, Community Design Strategies, which is included in the submission package. The principal rehabilitations to the façade will include:

- The removal of the unoriginal exit stair which was added to the building in the 1970's.
- Restoration of the original paint colours based on the heritage consultant's investigation.
- Retention of significant character-defining elements, like metal window screens and corrugated glass.

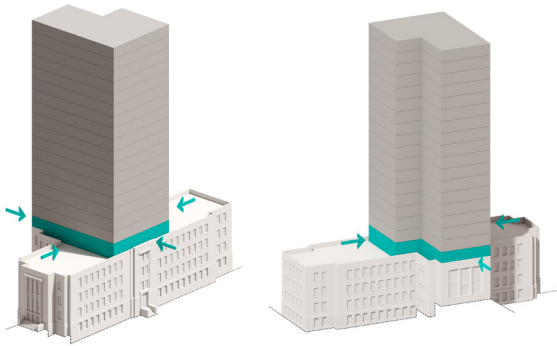
Additional discussion of the heritage aspects of the proposal are outlined in the *Heritage* section later in this document and are set out in detail in the conservation plan.



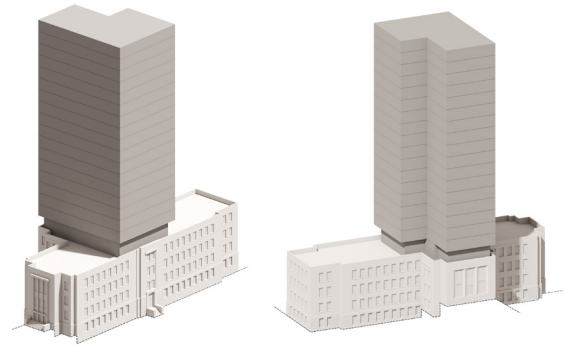
01 Define floor plate in response to existing entrances and asymmetry



02 Extrude floor plate to scale mass in context (add 3.0 FSR)



03 Inset Level 05 to provide separation of addition from heritage building



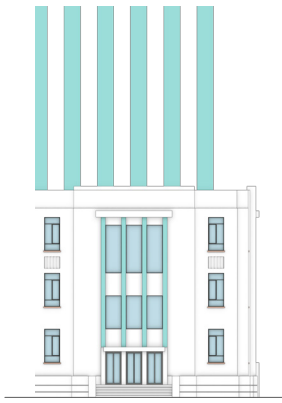
04 Resulting form

Massing derivation diagram

The addition to the historic BC Power Commission building takes the form of a slender tower with a direct formal relationship to two of the building's principal entrances. As articulated in the submission materials, the tower form matches the width of the prominent Blanshard Street main entrance façade and translates that form to the opposite elevation by symmetrically framing the prominent Fairfield Road entrance. The asymmetric relationship between the Blanshard Street entrance and the Fairfield Road entrance results in a L-shaped form. The tower floor plate respects the heritage building's footprint by keeping the tower façade aligned with or stepped back from the face of existing parapets below. The NW and SE faces of the addition are set back 19.3m and 22.6m, respectively, from the corresponding elevations of the heritage building. In addition, the fifth storey—the first above the existing heritage building—is further stepped back from the existing parapets by an additional 0.6m to preserve the visual integrity of the heritage structure and to transition more gracefully between the old and the new. The result is a horizontal base building whose historic character remains distinct, and a new vertical massing that, in part due to its reduced-size floor plate, minimizes the impact on the heritage structure.

The fenestration and balcony strategy employed on the addition takes cues from the existing building's form and detailing and reinterprets them with a contemporary expression. The strong vertical composition of the Art Deco building entrances is echoed in the vertical bands of glazing and wall above. The existing building's window proportions and cellular grid-like expression are reflected in the size and consistent articulation of openings above. Periodic horizontal banding and a lightly articulated parapet complete the architectural composition in response to the horizontal ordering of the Art Deco building below.

The design proposes a material vocabulary inspired by the contemporary application of the materials used in the construction of the heritage building. This includes: modern rain-screened wall assemblies clad with cementitious panels; and metal-detailed windows, doors, and balconies which take cues from the existing aluminum window grilles, stairway guards, and window systems.



Step 1. Create a strong vertical reference to key elements of the existing building.



Step 2. Articulate the horizontals using recessed cladding elements, referencing the language of the existing to delineate floors.



Step 3. Create a stronger horizontal emphasis at every third floor level to terminate verticals like the existing building and provide a more human scale to the facade.



Step 4. Resultant facade.

Fenestration and façade articulation diagram

The hotel and residential tower will share a primary entrance and lobby from a redesigned public plaza-style front entry and pick-up drop-off zone. This plaza will replace the existing asphalt parking lot at the corner of Blanshard Street and Burdett Avenue. The hotel, currently planned with 77 rooms, will feature a café and food service area adjacent to the Fairfield Road entrance, a shared fitness facility for guests and residents, a bookable meeting space / lounge in the historic Chairman’s Office on Level 3, and a rentable space at the Level 5 rooftop for small gatherings.

The residential tower will have its own indoor and outdoor amenity spaces, including a children’s play area on the east portion of the Level 05 roof.

Landscaping Architecture + Public Realm

As introduced in the Design Concepts above, the project proposes several distinct, significant landscape and public realm improvements on and around the site. Together, they represent an opportunity to activate the site and the park to make a significant contribution to the neighbourhood. These are:

- *Renewed Penwill Green:* A re-envisioned small urban park which enriches the community, that is a safe, welcoming place to gather, and which helps knit together the various pedestrian, active transport, greenspace, and public transit networks in downtown and the surrounding neighbourhoods.
- *A Blanshard Street Plaza:* A new space that welcomes the public to the front of the historic building, which defines the site with a more civic presence, and that provides more appropriate arrival for the intensified use of the site.
- *Burdett Avenue Redefined:* An enhanced street front which more than providing a missing sidewalk, expands public green space, provides multi-modal connections, and which helps link the upper plaza precinct to the renewed Penwill Green park.
- *More Active Fairfield Road:* A potential transit terminus with enhanced passenger waiting, a covered shelter, and bicycle parking. A new café, accessible from the street, where food and beverages might be enjoyed in the historic building or on the street.
- *On-site Gardens + Rooftops:* Provide a variety of outdoor experiences for guests and residents and a welcoming interface between the site and the surrounding community.
- *Vegetation + Stormwater Management:* New ecologically appropriate and drought tolerant planting throughout the site to manage stormwater run-off, enhance the urban biosphere, and help create a more welcoming and resilient landscape.



Conceptual image looking across Fairfield Road toward Penwill Green park

Policies and Guidelines

This application proposes to alter the zoning for the site from CBD-1 to a new Comprehensive Development (CD) zoning. This proposal is based on the unique opportunities and constraints of this site as described above, with the principal driver being the conservation and rehabilitation of the BC Power Commission Building. The intent is to meet the core objectives and principles in the Official Community Plan, Downtown Core Area Plan, and other applicable guidelines in a way that suits the specific urban design considerations of this unique and challenging site.

Land Use

The proposed land use, a commercial hotel with multiple dwelling residential, is consistent with the current CBD-1 zoning. Close to the inner harbour, convention centre, and the rest of downtown, the site is an excellent location for a hotel, and would add to the supply of hotel rooms in the area. At the edge of downtown, adjacent to several other Urban Place Designations that promote higher density residential use (Core Residential, Core Inner Harbour/Legislative, Urban Residential), the added dwellings are a good fit to the immediate neighbourhood and a welcome supplement to the anticipated employment growth in downtown Victoria.

780 Blanshard Site Area	CBD-1 Current FSR	DCAP + OCP Max Residential FSR	OCP Max Commercial FSR	Proposed FSR	Proposed Maximum Gross Floor Area
2,272 m ²	3.0:1	3.0:1	6.0:1	4.6:1 1.6:1 Commercial 3.0:1 Residential	10,474 m ²

Density

The development proposal has a total gross area of 10,384m², comprised of 3,565m² of commercial hotel space and 6,819m² of residential space. The current CBD-1 zoning generally permits a density of 3.0:1. In the OCP, the site is within the Core Business Urban Place Designation of the Urban Core planning area, which permits a maximum residential floor space ratio of 3:1 and total commercial floor space ratios ranging from a base of 4:1 to a maximum of 6:1. In the Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP), the site is within the Central

Business District, which reiterates a maximum residential floor space ratio of 3:1. The site is within the Special Density Area noted in Map 14, where changes to the maximum density “must be approved through a rezoning process that considers the policies of this Plan along with the local historic context, public realm context and other relevant plans, policies and design guidelines.” Directly opposite the site, on the north side of Burdett Avenue, is Density Bonus Area A-1, which contemplates a base mixed-use density of 4:1 and maximum density of 6:1.

Height

At 22 storeys—four storeys for the existing heritage building and 18 storeys for the addition—the proposed rooftop height for the development is 70.83m, with an additional 2.33m rooftop structure comprising the mechanical penthouse and elevator overrun. This exceeds the 43.0m set out by the CBD-1 zoning by 27.83m. The height is consistent with the Core Business height limit of up to 24 storeys stated in the OCP. The DCAP outlines a maximum building height of 45.0m or approximately 15 residential storeys for the site (Map 32). The primary reason for the proposed height is the opportunity to retain the existing heritage building and have a sensitive and well-considered architectural response in the design of the addition. As set out in the submission materials, the rooftop addition respects the existing footprint of the BC Power Commission building and derives its geometry from a relationship to two of the primary Art Deco-styled building entrances below. The result is a proposed reduced floor plate (386m²) when compared to typical residential towers (maximum 650m² for buildings above 30m). While the same proposed density could be contained within 14 overall storeys (4 existing + 10 addition)—and therefore comply with the 45.0m DCAP Map 32 height limit and the 650m² residential floor plate limit (Appendix 6)—the resultant massing would not respect the footprint of the existing heritage building. Studies of various alternate development forms were undertaken in the design process, and none were as successful as the proposed design.

There are several additional contextual factors which support this variance to the maximum height:

- The slender tower profile preserves more skyview, enhances access to daylight, and minimizes shadow impacts.
- The cross slope of the site—two storeys north to south—results in 20 perceived storeys at the main entrance at Blanshard Street and Burdett Avenue, and 22 storeys along Fairfield Road, which is directly opposite to two existing high-density residential projects, 751 Fairfield Road and 788 Humboldt Street, with street-facing heights of 18 and 14 storeys, respectively.
- The existing generous floor-to-floor heights in the heritage building are retained.

780 Blanshard Existing Height (Storeys)	CBD-1 Maximum Height	OCP Maximum Residential Storeys	DCAP Maximum Height (Approximate Residential Storeys)	Proposed Height (Storeys)
15.01m (4 storeys)	43.0m	24 storeys	45.0m (15 storeys)	70.83m (22 storeys)

Setbacks, Building and Street Interfaces

Anticipating the full-block street wall building typology predominant in the downtown core, the CBD-1 zoning has 0m minimum setbacks at the front, sides, and rear up to 20m in height. Above that, to preserve daylight reaching street level and to maintain separation between tall buildings, a series of increasing step-backs are required as buildings grow taller. For the ‘front’ of this property, which City staff have confirmed is on Blanshard Street, a 5:1 angle of inclination away from the street is required above 20m in height. For the other two side/rear

property lines, a step back of 3.0m is required between 20.0m and 30.0m, and 6.0m over 30.0m to 43.0m (Maximum Height). These setbacks are generally consistent with the Building and Street Interface Guidelines in the DCAP, which contemplate a street wall condition of 15.0m or 20.0m, depending on street type, with a 1:5 setback ratio beyond those heights.

In this proposal, the existing siting and floor plate configuration of the BC Power Commission building—a building with significant existing setbacks on the north and east—place constraints on the massing of any addition that confines itself to the footprint of the existing building. As a result, the proposed addition has minimum setbacks from Blanshard Street and Burdett Avenue of 9.75m and 8.90m, respectively. Along Fairfield Road, where the existing structure is close to the street, the addition is set back 3.58m at the closest point to the property line. This constraint results in the tower-form addition projecting beyond the 1:5 inclined plane above approximately 39m in height. At the top of the building this projection is 6.52m beyond the 1:5 setback ratio plane. As noted above, keeping the floor plate of the addition within the outline of the existing heritage building is a key attribute of success for the design response to the heritage building. There are several additional mitigating factors that further support this approach:

- Since the project is on the north side of Fairfield Road, the shadow impacts of the addition on the street immediately below are minimal.
- The small floor plate of the addition reduces the ‘canyon’ effect, and has a corresponding reduced shadow impact on the surrounding area when compared to a typical downtown midrise or highrise development typology.
- The more significant setbacks from Burdett Avenue and Blanshard Street, where larger public spaces and park areas are located, provide relief from the proximity of the addition above Fairfield Road.

Floor Plate Limitations and Building Separation

The small floor plate residential tower addition (386m²) conforms to the floor plate maximum size for buildings greater than 30m (maximum 650m²). Without any other abutting private property lines, the site has street frontage on all sides of the triangular lot and the footprint of the proposed tower addition fits entirely within the footprint of the existing heritage building. As such, while the residential exterior wall clearance to the property line along Fairfield Road does not conform with the 6.0m clearance called for in the DCAP Appendix 6, there is a 3.57m minimum clearance to the corner of the tower addition wall above Fairfield Road. The distance from the tower addition to the nearest tall neighbour, 751 Fairfield Road opposite, is greater than 18m.



Vista termination views to 780 Blanshard: Looking south along Blanshard Street (left) and looking east along Humboldt Street (right)

Building Design Guidelines

Retaining the existing heritage building and adding a tower-form addition results in a building form generally consistent with the Building Design Guidelines in DCAP Appendix 7. The tower addition produces a new composition consistent with a distinguishable building base and top. The existing Art Deco-styled entrances on multiple elevations maintain the building’s strong “address” and legibility. Mechanical equipment is effectively screened on rooftops, and despite no laneway or integrated loading facilities, loading and service access can be well accommodated and generally screened at the southeast corner near Blanshard Street and Fairfield Road.

In addition, the site has significant ‘landmark potential’ as it is located at two vista terminations:

- Looking south along Blanshard Street, the heritage building and tower form would be prominently visible as Blanshard curves east as it descends the slope toward Beacon Hill Park.
- Looking east along Humboldt Street from the Inner Harbour, the proposal creates a clear prominent termination of the view, framed by the existing context.

Sun shadow studies demonstrate that the proposal preserves solar access on sidewalks opposite the development during key mid-day hours and has a modest added impact on the adjacent streets and public realm overall. This is the result of the tower’s slender profile and its location at the south edge of the site within the footprint of the existing heritage building. Other tall buildings in the area cast significant shadows, reducing the net added incremental shadow impact of the proposal. Sun shadow analysis diagrams are included in the Large Project Supplementary Information booklet.

External Views + View Studies

The proposed addition appears in two of the public external views of downtown identified in DCAP Appendix 2. Visualizations of the proposal from the View 1: Laurel Point to Downtown Core Area and View 2: Inner Harbour from Songhees Point are shown below.



The proposal as seen from View 1: Laurel Point to Downtown Core Area.

In View 1 from Laurel Point, the proposal helps to establish the anticipated CBD backdrop articulated in the DCAP at the boundary between the Historic Commercial District and the Inner Harbour Causeway area, creating a multilayered and tiered urban profile. It contributes to this backdrop with a reserved material palette and regular fenestration pattern, allowing the richly detailed facades of the historic building stock to maintain prominence. The slim massing of the tower maximizes the sky view and preserves the legibility of the Empress Hotel’s roofline. By preserving the scale and character of the existing BC Power Commission Building as a podium, the proposal also helps maintain a massing and proportion that is compatible with the surrounding context at street level.



The proposal as seen from View 2: Inner Harbour from Songhees Point.

In View 2 from Songhees Point, the proposal is visible at the northern extent of this view as a backdrop to the Empress Hotel and the Customs House in a cluster of other tall contemporary buildings. It contributes to the anticipated stepped urban backdrop that helps frame the historic buildings along the Inner Harbour Causeway. The profile of the proposal is simple and quiet, allowing the variegated roofline of the Empress Hotel to remain legible and prominent. The façade is crafted from high quality materials that complement the surrounding context while remaining distinguishable and contemporary. The slim massing creates a unique fixture in the skyline, while the refined fenestration and balcony pattern does not detract from the prominence of the many important landmarks along the Inner Harbour Causeway.

Additional visualizations and analysis of shadowing, near and distant perspective views, and the impact of the proposed addition on the existing views from two nearby high rise residential developments are included in the Large Project Supplementary Information Booklet.

Project Benefits and Amenities

The development proposal aspires to benefit the economic, social, and cultural life of Victoria. The project team sees this project as a chance to leverage the unique opportunities and challenges of the site to reestablish 780 Blanshard Street as a significant address in the city. Several aspects will be of benefit to the broader community:

- Additional employment and tourist infrastructure supported by the hotel,
- The rehabilitation of and added public access to a significant historic building,
- Added downtown housing to support more lively and walkable communities, and
- An updated urban park and potential new public transit hub.

The completed development will feature a number of amenities for the residents, guests, and the public, including:

- Accessible sidewalks and green spaces all around the site,
- New project-sponsored dedicated car share spaces,
- New public transit shelter and seating,
- A shared eBike fleet for the building,
- Electrified short- and long-term personal mobility charging,
- A new public plaza,
- Opportunities for public art, and
- A publicly rentable historic conference room and new rooftop event space.

Need and Demand

The downtown area of Victoria is a key centre in the region's employment and population growth projections and planning. The recently released 2021 national census data show that the population of downtown Victoria grew by 40.8% between 2016 and 2021. This represents 25% of the total population growth in Victoria since 2016.

The anticipated growth in the downtown core forms part of the foundation of the Downtown Core Area Plan. The Victoria Housing Strategy (Phase 2) and the CRD Regional Growth Strategy identify housing as a core need for the region, especially in urban centres. The DCAP also refers to City forecasts which indicate that, by 2026, the total combined floor space demand for residential, office, retail, service, and hotel room uses in the Downtown Core Area will increase by an additional 853,800m² to 1,174,300m².

The 2021 report *Victoria's Housing Future* notes that current housing growth capacity in Victoria is falling short of future needs. This, in turn, affects the City's ability to meet housing affordability targets. The analysis of new housing units by target growth area set out in the OCP shows a potential shortfall in the Urban Core but a positive indication from recent trends.

Victoria's Housing Future also discusses the "15-minute neighbourhood" as a key concept in city planning, and underscores the social and economic value of building communities where

there are a diversity of shops, schools, offices, and other key destinations within a 15-minute walk from home. In addition to the existing employment base and network of schools and services, there is significant new commercial development near the site, including the recently approved Telus Ocean project (749 Douglas Street, 2-minute walk) and the proposed Capital VI office building (1221 Blanshard Street, 5-minute walk).

Supported by operator interest and overall demand and room occupancy forecasted to climb back to—and then exceed—pre-pandemic levels by 2024, there is a need in Victoria for more hotel rooms. The hotel is anticipated to be run by an internationally recognized boutique / lifestyle operator, with a target market segment of 34% commercial, 21% meeting and group, 35% leisure, and 11% contract / tour.

Safety and Security

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles have been considered in the building planning, landscape design, and public realm improvements, including the redesign of Penwill Green. The project aspires to be an active, inviting, safe, and inclusive precinct that will bring Victorians and visitors to and through the site in a way that strengthens urban networks and promotes neighbourhood vitality.

Transportation

The lot configuration and siting of the existing heritage building does not permit any significant off-street vehicle parking. Considerable effort has been undertaken in concert with WATT Consulting Group to develop a suite of mobility options and Transportation Demand Management measures to reduce vehicle parking demand and encourage the use of public transit and alternative active transportation modes (see more information in WATT’s Transportation Demand Management Study included in the submission materials). In addition, the immediate adjacency of the BC Transit bus terminus along Fairfield Road, the redesign of Penwill Green and the upgraded street frontages all around the building offer an opportunity to make broader neighbourhood-level transportation improvements. This has culminated with a vision for the development to become an “urban mobility hub.”

Vehicle + Bicycle Parking

While the proposal has limited off-street vehicle parking on the property, 25 off-site stalls within a short walking distance have been secured by Reliance Properties for long-term use by the development. The tenureship of the residential portion of the building program has not yet been determined by the owner. As a result, the vehicle parking requirement differs slightly between rental and strata use. The table below notes the current vehicle parking, the proposed, the Schedule C parking requirement for the proposed land uses, and the difference between the proposed and Zoning requirements.

Existing On-Site Vehicle Parking	Proposed Vehicle Parking	Required Vehicle Parking per Zoning Bylaw 2018 (rental / strata)	Reduction through Demand Management (rental / strata)	Shortfall (rental / strata)
6 stalls	27 stalls (25 off-site)	87 / 106 stalls (19 hotel) (58 rental or 76 strata)	-36 / -57	24 / 22 stalls

Significant long and short-term bicycle parking is proposed for building guests, residents, and visitors. Long-term bike parking will be electrified for charging. A fleet of 11 shared eBikes for resident and hotel guest-use is proposed. End-of-trip facilities for hotel staff, including lockers, showers, and secure, electrified storage are included. Residents will have access to a bike repair station and 12 large parking spaces for cargo bikes and similar over-size non-standard bicycles. In addition, bicycle parking and a public bicycle repair station are being contemplated adjacent to Penwill Green park and the transit area along Fairfield Road.

Long-Term Bicycle Parking		Short-Term Bicycle Parking	
Required Vehicle Parking per Schedule C	Proposed	Required Vehicle Parking per Schedule C	Proposed
122 spaces	160 spaces	13 spaces	22 spaces
(119 residential, 3 hotel)	(144 residential, 5 hotel, 11 shared eBikes)		

Loading

Loading will be managed at the southeast corner of the site at the existing service entrance. Standard delivery vehicles and waste management vehicles can be accommodated on site at the existing driveway crossing near the corner of Blanshard Street and Fairfield Road.

Parcel delivery vehicles and passenger pick-up and drop-off can be managed on-site at the front plaza at the corner of Blanshard Street and Burdett Avenue. A pick-up drop-off curb and two short-term parking spaces are provided at the front plaza. An additional short-term parking stall on Burdett Avenue next to the car share stalls is proposed for the building's use.

Transportation Demand Management

A variety of transportation demand management measures are proposed to reduce the overall demand for parking and to encourage alternate modes of transportation. These include:

- Three project-sponsored, publicly accessible car share spaces located on Burdett Avenue,
- Transit pass programs for hotel employees and tower residents,
- An in-building fleet of 11 eBikes to be shared among residents and hotel guests,
- Bicycle maintenance facilities and charging access for all long-term bicycle parking spaces,
- Long-term bicycle parking for extra-large cargo bikes and similar (min 10%),
- End-of-trip facilities for hotel staff,
- Ample short-term pick-up and drop-off space to facilitate deliveries, ride hailing, and other short-term uses, and
- Multi-modal wayfinding to promote active transit and public transit use

Public Transit Infrastructure Improvements

The site is adjacent to the existing Fairfield at Blanshard transit terminus point for the Victoria Regional Transit System. In addition to overall pedestrian and bicycle connection improvements to this transit node from the building and surrounding area, the site's development offers several potential transit infrastructure improvement opportunities that would be of benefit to not only the neighbourhood but the City and region. The suggested transit infrastructure improvements for the site include:

- *Potential expanded transit vehicle capacity:* The extension of the layby curb on the north side of Fairfield Road west towards Burdett Avenue. Expanded capacity could also potentially support the introduction of RapidBus, since two of the transit system's proposed RapidBus routes (the West Shore RapidBus Line and Peninsula RapidBus Line) will require a terminus point in the downtown area.
- *Potential transit vehicle electric charging infrastructure:* Could provide the opportunity to evolve the transit system to zero emission vehicles and also reduce noise of transit vehicles in the area.
- *Expanded transit passenger amenities:* Including transit shelter, expanded waiting space and bus loading facilities on Fairfield Road integrated as part of the Penwill Green improvements.
- *Transit staff facilities within the building:* Including a washroom and small breakroom with kitchenette for BC Transit drivers.

Heritage

The BC Power Commission Building is a registered heritage building (R/Com) in the City of Victoria. The building was designed by the BC Public Works Department's Chief Architect, Henry Whittaker. It was built in 1949-50 and is an example of late Art Deco expression. Its geometric form and ornamentation provide a significant counterpoint to the typically Victorian nineteenth century architecture of nearby landmarks such as St. Ann's Academy and communicate a sense of modernity well suited to its original function as the headquarters for the electrification of the province in the mid-twentieth century. It was occupied continuously for public sector use for the Power Commission and then various government Ministries until the property was sold.



British Columbia Power Commission Building, photographed in 1951

Community Design Strategies is the heritage consultant for the project and they have prepared a heritage conservation plan for the building. It is included with the rezoning submission materials along with a "Summary of Research and Revised Statement of Significance" prepared in 2020. According to the Statement of Significance, the character-defining elements of the BC Power Commission Building are:

- Location on the edge of the Humboldt Valley.
- Four-storey flat-roofed form and geometric massing.
- Architectural composition designed to accommodate its sloping lot and to accentuate the height of the southern façade.
- Association with the BC Power Commission as evidenced in such interior elements as the three-storey high aluminum stairwell screen with the initials B.C.P. and such exterior elements as incised signage on the north façade.
- All surviving Art Deco detailing relevant to its 1949 design.
- Surviving interior fittings and fixtures related to its original design. And,
- Original spatial configurations, fittings, and detailing of the Conference Room (originally the Chairman's Office).

The intent for conservation is to preserve the exterior and interior character-defining elements. Although the original spatial configuration will be adapted for reuse, the Conference Room (Chairman's Office) and west stairwell will remain fully intact. The double-loaded corridor along a central east-west circulation spine will also be retained. The proposed interior partition scheme is compatible with the existing building fenestration pattern. The historically intact third floor entrance lobby and the original wood paneled library on the fourth floor were not identified as character-defining elements, but the team is working on interior layouts that enable the retention and/or re-use of these features to the greatest degree possible.

Standard 11 of the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* states that heritage value and character-defining elements must be conserved when creating any new additions and that all new work must be physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to and distinguishable from the historic place. The proposed tower addition meets this standard in the following manner:

- It conserves the heritage value and character-defining elements by not obscuring, radically changing, or having a negative impact on character-defining materials and forms. Hotel use ensures the space has public access; the altered spatial configuration for hotel suites is like the original office layout.
- It is physically compatible, yet distinguishable from, the BC Power Commission building in that the addition will not be an imitation nor will it be in severe contrast. It will use materials, texture and colours that are harmonious with those of the historic building; taking design cues from the Art Deco detailing, such as the scale, rhythm and alignment of the fenestration and horizontal and vertical elements and blend contemporary interpretations into the design of the tower, thus emphasizing the integrity of the historic building, complementing the building, and respecting its heritage value.
- The addition is further distinguishable from the building's historic "podium" with clear distinction between what is old and what is new, while preserving the materials and features that characterize the heritage building.
- Standard 11 requires the addition to be subordinate to the historic place. This standard clearly states it is not a question of size. Although the height of the addition competes with the low-rise scale of the historic building, the addition can be considered subordinate in that it confines its footprint to the central spine between the two primary ground floor entrances, thus preserving the historic building's horizontality, scale and relationship to the site and its context.
- The addition is also set back on the north and south sides to maintain views of the outer edges of the historic building and confines its location to ensure most of the heritage building's mass is untouched. Views from the southwest and southeast give a sense of the addition being displaced beyond the historic building, thus giving the perception that it is a separate structure.

Green Building Features

The design team has a shared commitment to environmental responsibility and includes LEED-accredited professionals and Certified Passive House Designers. In addition to meeting or exceeding the requirements of the BC Energy Step Code, the team will consider the global warming potential of building materials, up- and down-stream waste potential of materials, and the durability and suitability of materials, systems, and equipment.

As an example of adaptive re-use, the project proposes an array of environmentally responsible features:

- BC Energy Step Code performance at Step 4 for the residential tower and Step 3 for the commercial hotel.
- Re-use of most of the existing concrete structure of the BC Power Commission building, resulting in significantly reduced construction material use, less energy and waste expended in demolition and disposal, preservation of embodied carbon, and the extension of life for a 70+ year old structure.
- An all-electric heat pump-based heating and cooling system capable of being shared between both the hotel and residential tower resulting in a more sustainable, efficient system.
- Landscaped roofs and site planting designed for on-site storm water management.
- An architectural design which considers passive design principles, limiting window-to-wall ratios.
- Extensive bicycle storage facilities, including electrified long-term bicycle parking spaces and spaces for cargo bicycles.

- End-of-trip facilities for hotel staff, including showers, lockers, and secure, electrified bicycle storage.
- Building-sponsored public car share spaces and resident car share memberships to reduce parking and personal vehicle demand. And,
- Low-use water fixtures and high efficiency LED lighting throughout.

Infrastructure

In addition to the streetscape, public transit, and park renewal works described above, the team has conducted a preliminary site servicing study for the proposed intensified use on the site. The estimated potential peak flows permitted under the current zoning are higher than those from the proposed uses and density. The technical memorandum by WSP is included in the submission materials.

Community Engagement

The project team have consulted with City staff several times over the development of this project. The team met the Downtown Residents Association in December 2021 and provided the pre-application package to the City for online viewing and comment.

The team organized and hosted a hybrid in-person and online Community Meeting on March 21, 2022. The in-person component was held near the site at the Parkside Hotel (810 Humboldt Street) and was attended by more than forty people. Several members of the project team were present in-person to discuss the project and answer questions. Several more representatives from the project team were available online, where approximately twelve additional members of the public participated virtually.

The most frequently expressed concerns at the meeting revolved around parking and traffic, with a smaller number of attendees expressing concerns about height, shadowing, and view impacts. Feedback from the Community Meeting was used to undertake additional studies, including a Traffic Impact Assessment, View Analysis from nearby homes at 751 Fairfield Road and 788 Humboldt Street, and additional Shadow Analysis. It also directly informed revisions to the application including the implementation of additional Transportation Demand Management measures to address parking concerns.

The team also organized and held a public “open house” at the 780 Blanshard Street heritage building on June 1, 2022. The open house was publicized by way of a Canada Post mail-out for a 500m radius around the site, web and social media announcements, and media coverage. In addition to the opportunity for the public to see and experience the building, the team prepared a presentation and comprehensive set of poster boards to introduce the project.

Ten representatives from the design team were on hand to discuss the project individually with interested members of the public. The team estimates that 60–80 people attended the open house. The discussion was wide-ranging, with a mix of positive, negative, and neutral (questions) generally expressed. Of the written feedback received on comment cards, two respondents voiced support for the project, one expressed concern for the project, and six voiced neutral comments and/or suggestions for improvement. A summary of the event is included with the submission materials.

All revisions made to the application as a result of Community Engagement are bubbled and annotated on the drawings.

Archaeological Site Clearance

A review of the site undertaken by Stantec determined that there are no archaeological concerns. There are no registered archaeological sites on the property or any nearby properties, and modeling suggests low archaeological potential for the presence of unregistered sites on the property. This determination is being summarized in a formal letter that can be provided during the application review process.

Site Disclosure Statement

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment was completed by Pottinger Gaherty Environmental Consultants and identified that no commercial activities took place at the site that would be referred to as Schedule 2 uses as defined in the BC Contaminated Sites Regulation. As such, a Site Disclosure Statement is not required as defined in the *Environmental Management Act*, Section 40 and the BC Contaminated Sites Regulation, Part 2. Please see the enclosed memo from PGL forming part of the application documents.

Conclusion

The overall aim for this rezoning proposal is to enhance the building, the site, the neighbourhood, and the downtown. The team hopes that this project will contribute to Victoria's growth and evolution in pursuit of its vision, and do so by way of meaningful engagement with all stakeholders in the shared project of city making. We look forward to connecting with residents and working with staff and Council through the rezoning process.

The Large Project Supplementary Information booklet included with the submission documents contains a variety of detail and analysis on the proposal, including additional contextual information, site and historical analysis, shadowing and view impact studies, and details on proposed materials.

Please do not hesitate to contact the team for any additional information or clarifications.

office of mcfarlane biggar architects + designers

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SM' or 'S.M.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Steve McFarlane Architect AIBC FRAIC LEED® AP
principal

Summary of Design Materials

The following list is a summary of the supporting materials provided for this rezoning application at the time of submission:

- Letter to Mayor and Council *
- Large Project Supplementary Information Booklet *
- Drawing Package:
 - Architectural Drawings *
 - Landscape Drawings *
 - Civil Drawings *
 - Survey Plan
- Heritage Conservation Plan *
- Heritage Research Summary Report and Revised Statement of Significance *
- Transportation Demand Management Study *
- Preliminary Traffic Impact Assessment Memo *
- Sewage Attenuation Review *
- Arborist Report *
- Tree Replacement Plan * (see Landscape Drawings)
- Letter of Interest from MODO Car Share *
- Open House Summary *
- 3D Digital Model in SketchUp Format *

* Indicates item new or updated from pre-application submission