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ARCHITECTURE

BOROWSKI SAKUMOTO FL'GG MCINTYRE LTD.

B.A., B.Arch (HONS),
ARCHITECT AIBC,
MRAIC, LEED AP

August 27, 2018

VIA: *Hardcopy*

DIPLOMA, B.Arch,
ARCHITECT AIBC, MRAIC

Mayor & Council

The City of Victoria
Planning & Building Department
1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC, V8W 1P6

Received
City of Victoria

AUG 27 2018

Planning & Development Department
Development Services Division

B.E.S., M.Arch,
ARCHITECT AIBC, MRAIC

Dear Mayor & Council:

B.E.D., M.Arch,
ARCHITECT AIBC,
MRAIC, LEED AP

**RE: MORGAN BLOCK (645-651 JOHNSON ST., 1314-1324 DOUGLAS ST.)
HERITAGE ALTERATION PERMIT (DP) APPLICATION
PROJECT RATIONALE LETTER
Project No: 1522**

INTRODUCTION

Merrick Architecture is pleased to make this Heritage Alteration Permit (DP) Application on behalf of our client for the restoration and further development of two heritage registered buildings in downtown Victoria. This proposal is to restore the existing two storey facades of the Morgan Block (314-1324 Douglas St.) and Watson & McGregor building (645-651 Johnson St.) in a historically sensitive manner and incorporate them into one cohesive development that maintains ground level commercial uses and introduces a new residential component above. This 3 storey residential component is accommodated through the re-use of the existing upper level of the buildings and a two storey vertical addition. Our client (284244 BC Ltd.) is a trust entity of the Morgan family which has owned the building for several generations and this project serves as a continuation of the family's legacy in the city and on this site.

PROJECT BENEFITS

The proposed development provides a feasible means to rejuvenate two significant buildings on prominent commercial streets and restore their heritage character in line with the fabric of old town. It also facilitates the continued ground level commercial uses while increasing the vibrancy and streetscape appeal of the immediate area. The mixture of 30 new residences will add to the residential building stock in an area of the downtown core that is in need increased housing options. The existing buildings are currently underutilized for their urban location in their current configuration, and there is not currently an economic pathway to support their restoration without the introduction of additional area. This increase in density and height from the current condition stays within the parameters of the current zoning and there are no variances requested in this regard.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

The heritage character of both the Morgan Block and Watson & McGregor buildings is to be restored in line with the Heritage Conservation Plan contained within this application and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Some key elements of the conservation plan include re-instatement of an original raised parapet on the Douglas Street façade, the stripping of paint back to the original exposed brick, re-instatement of historically sensitive commercial storefronts, the restoration of original wood windows, and re-instatement of an

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original sheet metal upper cornice on the Johnson St. façade. The scale of the proposed building is also in keeping with the character of old town (no height or density variances requested) and the new floor levels are set back from the original building façades in a manner that maintains the readable scale of the original buildings and is visually secondary to them.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The site of this project is within the downtown core area and as such is subject to the city's Downtown Core Area Plan Guidelines. The design of the proposed building configuration is in line with these guidelines with respect to maintaining the continuous street wall patterning while providing sufficient setbacks at upper levels for daylighting and liveability considerations for the residential units. The internal courtyard configuration of the building furthers the liveability benefits to the residential units by creating dual aspect outlooks for the majority of the suites.

TRANSPORTATION

There are no car parking requirements that the site is subject to within the zoning regulations and it is not feasible to provide any within the project parameters. With the project being on an urban site, there are other reasonable transportation options that the project supports. The scheme provides 30 residential and 6 commercial class 1 bicycle spaces as well as 6 residential and 6 commercial class 2 spaces consistently with the schedule C requirements and associated guidelines. The building is also in very close proximity to public transportation and car share options which further the reasonable viability of no car parking on the site.

INFRASTRUCTURE

This development proposal anticipates several service connection upgrades from the building to the adjacent municipal infrastructure. These include new water, sanitary and storm services as well as a new hydro meter vault. Included in this application is a civil site servicing plan for further information on the proposal as it relates to existing municipal infrastructure.

GREEN BUILDING INDICATORS

The building design retains significant portions of the existing building both as a means of heritage conservation as well as a way to reduce the use of new building materials and demolition waste. The design also incorporates a large extensive green roof which helps to reduce the demand on the storm water system from roof runoff as well as reducing the heat island effect created by typical roof systems in urban settings. By focusing development on an existing urban site such as this the proposal creates housing without the loss of any existing trees or green space. The common roof patio also provides an urban agriculture space to allow residents to grow their own vegetables. The project also promotes the use of alternative modes of transportation to car ownership as noted above such as cycling, public transportation and car sharing.

HERITAGE ADVISORY PANEL

Merrick Architecture and Donald Luxton & Associates was pleased to present and discuss this proposal with the Heritage Advisory Panel on July 10, 2018. The panel voted to recommend to council that this application be approved with the provision of three recommendations. These three recommendations are listed below as well as an outline of how the project has responded to these.

- 1) HAPL: *That particular care be taken during construction to not disturb the building at the corner of Douglas and Johnson Streets.*

All necessary and appropriate consultants will be engaged through the detail design and construction process in order to outline and implement all shoring, bracing, and stabilization measures required in relation to this project and as it applies to the above noted adjacent property.

- 2) HAPL: *Consideration be given to the redesign or relocation of the elevator shaft so that it is not a freestanding tower.*

A revision to the exterior treatment of the elevator shaft has been implemented based on this feedback received from the panel. Additional portions of architectural metal lattice with cascading vines has been used in order to visually unify the elevator shaft with the adjacent building volume and to reduce its appearance as a free standing element. The lattice panels and vines also create additional visual interest and softens the transition from existing to new elements.

- 3) HAPL: *Increase the setback of the addition on both elevations to 3-4m.*

The proposed upper storey setbacks provide a clear visual separation of the heritage facades from the new components above and are maintained as the dominant visual element based on the relative proportions created between the two. The new portion of façade at level 4 along Douglas street is setback 3m, with the lesser 2.6m setback at level 3 being effectively hidden from street level vantages behind the heritage raised parapet to be re-instated. On Johnson street the level 4 façade steps back 2.35m from 1.33m at level 3, but also maintains it's appearance as a secondary element from the narrower street level viewing angles along Johnson street. These relationships as proposed are in line with strategies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada. Consideration of further increase to these setbacks should be viewed in the context of the proposals overall conformance to zoning criteria such as density and height without any variances being required. As such, further increase to the setbacks noted above is not seen as necessary nor is feasible within the overall project parameters.


SUMMARY


Through the redevelopment of the Morgan Block this proposal helps rejuvenate an important area of the downtown core. It is able to do so in a manner that respects sensitivities to height and density within the old town district while restoring two important heritage registered buildings. The building design looks to both strengthen the original character of these buildings while adding a complementary new component that provides increased vibrancy and housing to the area.

We look forward to your review and consideration of our application. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information, have questions or require clarifications or supplemental materials in support of the application.

HAP Project Rationale Letter
Project No. 1522 - Morgan Block
August 27, 2018

Yours truly,
MERRICK ARCHITECTURE – BOROWSKI SAKUMOTO FLIGG MCINTYRE LTD.


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