

S A L I E N T

Letter to Mayor and CouncilMay 28th, 2018

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



Dear Mayor Lisa Helps and Members of City Council,

Re: Application for Heritage Designation for the "Sawyer Block" at 840 Fort Street

Salient (840 Fort) Properties Ltd. c/o The Salient Group is pleased to enclose an application accompanying this letter to designate 840 Fort Street as heritage under the City of Victoria's Register of Heritage Properties.

Salient recently acquired this building in April 2018 with both an approved Development Permit and Building Permit to redevelop the existing 2-storey building into a 6-storey rental apartment building with ground floor commercial retail space. Although the property is not formally designated, a heritage covenant has been registered on title that restricts any alteration to the property without approval from Council.

The scope of work permitted by the Development Permit and Building Permit includes the retention of the existing 2-storey facade with significant alterations to this facade to accommodate the approved redevelopment design. Following a series of conversations with the City and design team Salient is revising the proposal, choosing to minimize interventions to the facade.

Salient's revised application proposes to rehabilitate the storefront based on the circa. 1960 configuration.

Historical Criteria

840 Fort represents the eastward expansion of Victoria's commercial precinct and the traditional retail zone of Fort Street. The building was originally constructed in 1908-1909 by Walter E. Staneland to be used as a paint shop. It was sold to Mowat-Grant in 1946 where it continued to operate as a retail paint store until 1969 when Sawyer Sewing Machines moved in, ultimately giving the building its title as the "Sawyer Block" which it has now become commonly known. Generations of the Sawyer family owned and operated the family business in this location for the next 35 years until 2005. It has been vacant since this time. The Sawyer Block has experienced almost a century of continuous commercial retail space, a tradition that Salient intends to carry on within this building.

Architectural Criteria

840 Fort is modest 2-storey Edwardian building designed by Walter E. Staneland and constructed with a wood and brick structure. Defining elements of the original facade include wood frame store front

glazing with large glass panes beneath multi pane transom windows, cast iron columns and sheet metal cornices providing horizontal definition on the south face. Though the building was constructed to the property line at the street, a narrow lane on the west side of the building connected Fort Street to parking behind the building. This breezeway will be retained, featured and will provide the primary access to the homes above.

Integrity

The revised design proposed by Salient reduces the scope of approved alterations to the existing façade. The building façade will be retained in situ and rehabilitated storefronts will be reconstructed in wood based on the circa 1960 configuration, modified with the addition of two points of egress in the historic façade to comply with building code requirements. The exterior clay brick walls will be repaired, repointed and painted. The cornices and parapet will be repaired and seismically retained back to the building structure.

The contemporary addition is complementary to the historic façade, thoughtfully differentiated in details, materiality and pattern.

Although Salient intends to be the long-term owner and operator of this property, a designation of this façade will ensure its distinguishing features are retained and maintained in their historic form for the life of the building, and that the building cannot be demolished or altered without consent of City Council.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this application to designate 840 Fort as heritage. We look forward to working with City Staff to progressing this application, and to working with the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust team to rehabilitate this historic façade to it's original configuration.

Sincerely,

Salient (840 Fort) Properties Ltd. c/o The Salient Group



Robert Fung
President

cc: Merinda Conley, Senior Heritage Planner