

July 4th, 2019

Mayor and Council

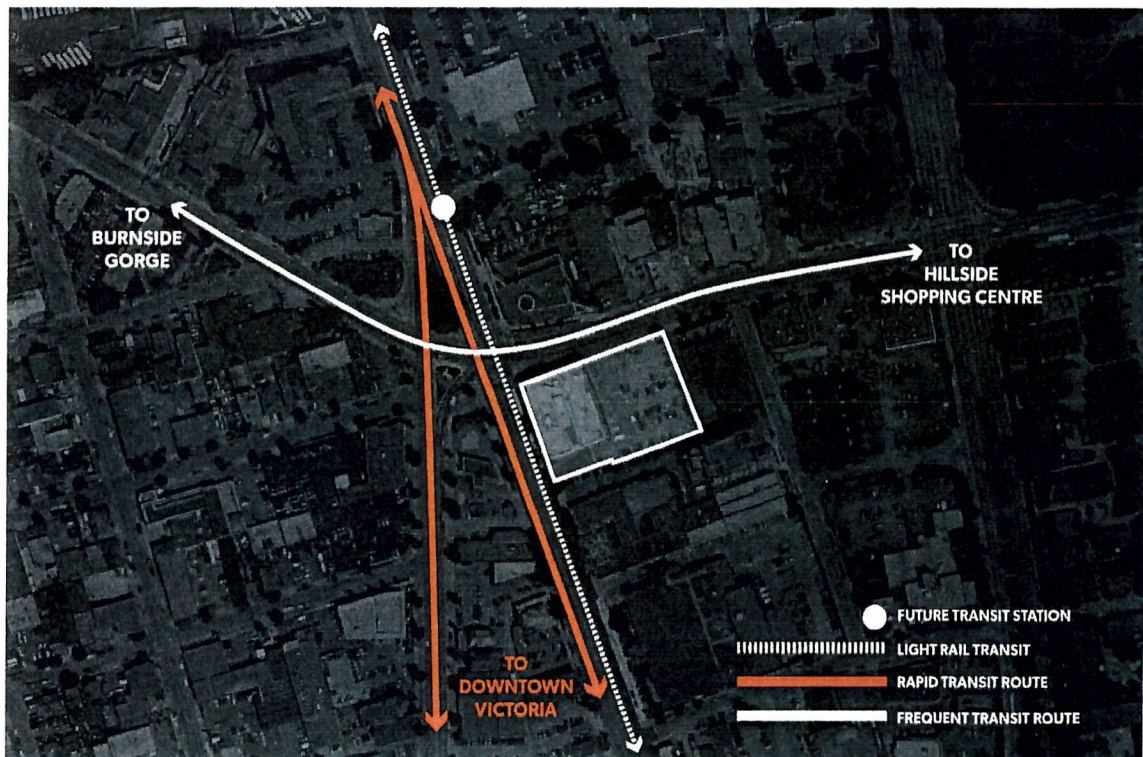
City of Victoria
c/o Leanne Taylor, Senior Planner
Sustainable Planning and Community Development

1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

RE: Rezoning for the Scott Building mixed use development

Dear Mayor Helps, City Council,

We are pleased to present to you our application for the revitalization and addition to the Scott Building, the prominent heritage building located at the southeast corner of Hillside and Douglas in the Burnside Gorge Neighborhood. Considered one of the major gateways to Downtown Victoria, this intersection is an important site for Humber Green, identified in the Official Community plan as a Large Urban Village. Our proposal brings important rental residential units to the neighborhood, strengthens the iconic historic character of the site and enhances the neighborhood and streets with vibrant new retail and café spaces.



Description of Proposal

The project includes the rejuvenation of the existing three-storey Scott Building, a century-old brick-clad building with hybrid timber and steel structure, used for many different purposes throughout its life. The Scott Building will be revitalized to maintain its vintage character while employing updated building components where appropriate for building code and energy requirements. The building will undergo seismic upgrades and modern extensions to the east and the south. The centre of the building will be removed on the upper two-storeys to allow for daylight to new apartment units. A discrete fourth level, mostly concealed behind the parapet of the existing building, will be added to provide additional rental apartments. Through these upgrades, 90% of the existing heritage building will be retained.

The new volume to the east of the existing Scott Building will be of six-storey wood frame construction. The 6-storey volume is separated from the existing building so that the existing building is the visual focus from the street. Modern interventions as part of the renovation of the existing building, including new street-level café and retail spaces and new rental apartments above, borrow the language from the new building and marry them into the existing Scott building's character, harmonizing the project as one coherent development.

Interventions to the Scott Building are pushed back several feet from the facade to be recessive to the heritage elevation. The relief created by the extra depth in the sidewalk frames entry points to the building.

The two volumes frame a central plaza landscaped with hard and soft textures that create a pedestrianized experience while allowing for intermittent vehicular access to the rear of the existing building for loading and garbage collection and short term commercial parking (4 stalls provided).

The main floor of the existing Scott Building will be commercial/retail. A cafe is also located on the main floor of the east Scott Building extension, facing and activating Hillside Avenue. On the main floor of the extension facing Douglas Street a restaurant or retail space is proposed. Set back from the street, patio seating could potentially wrap the front and side of the tenancy, returning pedestrian activity to the street. The central plaza will be accessible to the public and is designed to be enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

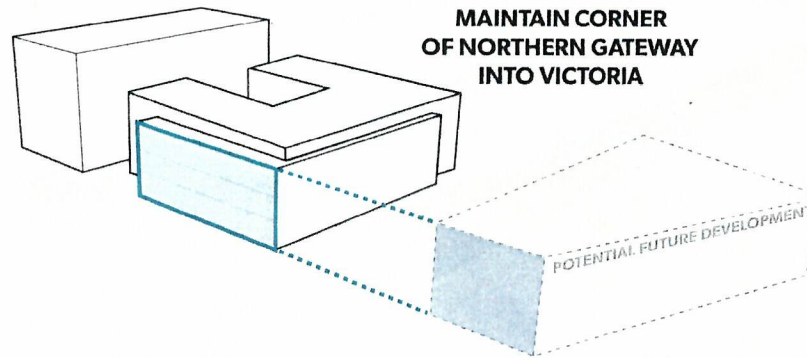
The site will undergo rezoning to a new site-specific zone. At this time the City has not determined the zoning classification however it is in accordance with the Official Community Plan and Neighborhood Plan. As per 14.1.3 of the Burnside Gorge plan, the proposed development utilizes 2.5 FSR.

Government Policies

This proposal has been developed in accordance with the Official Community Plan and the Burnside Gorge Neighborhood Plan. As per land use designation, the building will follow the requirements of 5 to 6 storeys of commercial or mixed use, with the ground floor including village commercial use along the street frontages. Parking will be provided underground.

The building design responds to the intents of the Principles of the Design for Humber Green (Section 14.6 of the Burnside Gorge Neighborhood Plan). Development along arterial roadways will include one level of commercial use with commercial frontages. Residential uses will be limited to upper floors along arterial roads. Development fronting Douglas Street will establish Douglas Street as a main street with a pattern of smaller storefronts at ground level.

The proposed development strengthens Humber Green as the northern gateway into Victoria by maintaining the focus of the heritage Scott Building with complementary contemporary architecture for the new construction.



SITE CONSIDERATIONS | NORTHERN GATEWAY

*14.1
HUMBER GREEN IS THE FUTURE NORTHERN GATEWAY
TO DOWNTOWN VICTORIA AND WILL SUPPORT A MIX
OF COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL USES WITH RETAIL
FRONTAGES ONTO DOUGLAS STREET.

Project Benefits

It is exciting to be a part of the early conversations about the vision of the Humber Green village. We have met with the Burnside Gorge Association and have presented to the community and are pleased to hear that the project addresses their needs for increased housing, particularly rental, in this part of the neighborhood.

We are delighted to contribute to the increase in activity along Hillside Avenue and Douglas Street. The public plaza between the two buildings along Hillside Avenue welcomes pedestrians to engage with the development. The proposed café, respectfully recessed back from the existing Scott Building frontage, encourages foot traffic along the block. Café patio seating spills out into the plaza and additional plaza furniture, greenery, trees, and thoughtful hardscaped areas further activate the space. Along Douglas Street, an outdoor patio flanks the proposed restaurant/retail space at the south of the development and a landscaped walkway provides a connection through to the central plaza.

An amenity room on the ground floor of the 6 storey building opens onto the central plaza to extend the space outdoors when the weather is fair. Every suite is afforded at least one secure bike parking rack in the underground parkade level. Suites are comfortable in size with quality finishes. Most suites will have large covered balconies highlighted by a unique tapered articulation of the exterior façade. The angle of this feature maximizes daylight to the units while providing shelter to facilitate year-round use and enhanced livability for building occupants.

Need and Demand

As mentioned, residential units are very desirable in this neighborhood due to a limited, aging housing stock. In this area, demand for office space is low, and the change of use is practical from an office stock standpoint. Through converting Levels 2 and 3 of the existing building from commercial to residential, adding a fourth storey and extending the building footprint, seventy-eight new residential units are provided.

Currently, the site to the east of the Scott Building is a surface parking lot. The new 6-storey residential building on this site provides a further seventy-three residential units, bringing the total to 151 purpose-built rental units to address the community's need for housing.

The change of use and increase in density to 2.5 FSR is supported in the OCP and Neighborhood Plans.

Neighbourhood

As noted, we have designed the overall development to be respectful of the heritage building while strengthening the Humber Green gateway to the city. The new 6-storey volume is sited specifically to give breathing room to the Scott Building and is set back from the existing building to give the heritage building priority. The 6-storey volume is oriented in a simple north-south axis to provide east and west views and to minimize impact to adjacent sites. The highest point of the development relates to the large eight-storey building at the Ross Place Retirement Residence adjacent the site to the southeast.

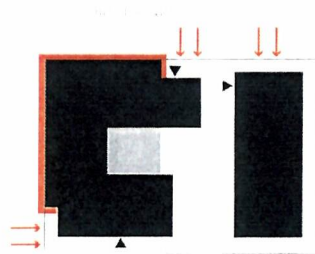
Impacts

We anticipate that the development and its many new residents will further contribute to the neighbourhood's already vibrant population. Speaking with the community at large and with the community association, we have heard strong support for the development, with optimism that the new building will help foster a greater connection to the surroundings through a more continuous residential street edge and increased safety and security features.

A notable enhancement we propose with this development is to restore the pass-through under the northwest corner of the heritage Scott Building that was provided at the time of original construction. Since then the pass-through had been lost through commercial renovations. By bringing this condition back, there is a substantial increase in space on the footpath for pedestrian flow and a significant increase in safety for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists at this otherwise narrow and congested sidewalk corner.

Design and Development Permit Guidelines

As part of the Rezoning and Development Application process, we are also applying for Heritage Designation. The site falls within Development Permit Area DPA 7A. The project has incorporated the City policies and guidelines including Development Permit Area policies, to inform all aspects of the design including density, massing, and urban realm. An example is shown below, illustrating how the primary plan of the major volumes has been directed by Burnside Gorge Neighborhood plan policies.

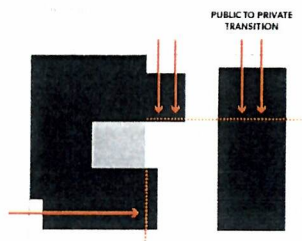


TRANSITION OF USE | HERITAGE TO NEW

4.1.5
ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF
IMPORTANT HERITAGE BUILDINGS

COMMERCIAL TO RES

14.4.5
MANAGE TRANSITIONS BETWEEN
RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL /
COMMERCIAL USES THROUGH
SENSITIVE DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE



PUBLIC TO PRIVATE

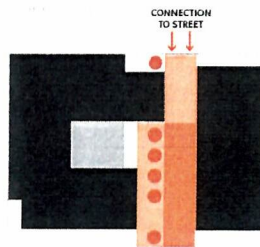
PUBLIC TO PRIVATE

14.4.5
MANAGE TRANSITIONS BETWEEN
RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL/
COMMERCIAL USES THROUGH
SENSITIVE DESIGN AND LANDSCAPE

LANDSCAPE TRANSITION

PATIO GRADE CHANGE

14.7.4
RESIDENTIAL GROUND FLOOR
FRONTAGES ON INTERNAL STREETS
SHOULD FEATURE LANDSCAPING AND
A TRANSITION FROM PUBLIC TO
PRIVATE SPACE ESTABLISHED BY THE
PRESENCE OF SEMI-PUBLIC SPACES
SUCH AS PORCHES AND GRADE
CHANGE



COURTYARD

ENHANCE LIVABILITY

DIRECT SUNLIGHT

VISUAL CONNECTION

14.7.5
WHERE APPLICABLE, BLOCKS
REDEVELOPED AND RESIDENTIAL USES
ARE INCLUDED. COURTYARD STYLE
BUILDINGS ARE ENCOURAGED IN
ORDER TO ENHANCE THE LIVABILITY
OF THIS AREA FOR RESIDENTS

Safety and Security

CPTED and safety considerations have been driving factors throughout the development of this design. The forms of the buildings at the ground plane are purposely kept simple, to reduce the sense of unknown conditions and to reduce the potential for persons to hide behind corners. At site boundaries, planting and barriers will be kept low to maintain strong safe visual connections.

The development addresses current concerns about transient and potential illegal activities in the area by providing passive surveillance to the surrounding areas and into the central plaza. Along the southeast and east edges of the site private patios extend to the property line deterring transient activity.

Transportation

In alignment with the projected needs of the new development, the applicant is seeking a vehicle parking stall reduction from the requirements set out in Schedule C - Off-Street Parking. The parking reduction is based off a parking study conducted by Watt Consulting on the predicted parking demand for the site. The parking study summarizes the many alternative, multi-modal transportation options available in the area including the excellent walkability of the area, the Hillside AAA bikeway, the Douglas Street Rapid Transit network and the Hillside Avenue Frequent Transit network with a new bus stop proposed directly in front of the development.

Based on this proposed parking variance, one-and-a-half levels of underground parking will be provided with spaces dedicated for commercial and residential visitors parking and a separate, secure, gated residential parking area.

The project will meet the requirements for short-term and long-term bicycle parking stalls. 12 Short-term on-street bicycle racks will be located along the Hillside Ave. by the café and residential entrances to encourage activity along Hillside. 8 additional short-term bicycle rack will be located along Douglas Street, set back off the public sidewalk at the restaurant storefront in the south extension.

Heritage

The Scott Building, dating back to 1911, will be revitalized to maintain its vintage character while employing updated building components where appropriate for building code and energy requirements. The building will undergo seismic upgrades, a recessive 4th storey addition and extensions to the east and south, set back from the heritage facades.

On the east side, the center of the existing building will be removed at the upper two levels to create an internal-facing courtyard, admitting daylight to new apartment units on the upper floors. Facing the street, the ground floor will remain commercial and have storefronts on Douglas Street and Hillside Ave. The public-facing character of the existing Scott Building will be restored to its original character.

The building will be listed on the Heritage Register and designated as part of this rezoning and development process. A conservation plan will be included with this rezoning application.

Green Building Features

Rating System

- This project will fulfil the criteria for Step 1 of the Step Code. In addition to this, it will take important pieces from many rating systems for a curated approach to green building that responds uniquely to our design and site, to best optimize the performance of the building. It is the design team's philosophy that Green Rating Systems have merits but at times also present challenges that contradict the intents of the points in the systems.

Site Selection and Design

- Tapered overhangs of balconies reduce summer solar gain while maximizing winter solar gain.
- Residential suites are designed with operable windows and/or doors for natural ventilation.

Innovation and Design

- The building has been designed with an integrated design process involving the design team including construction managers and will continue to be managed through an integrated process through construction.
- The project will seek to employ panelized or prefabricated products throughout, especially for structure and major systems.
- Light wood frame has been selected as the primary structural material in the interest of employing local trades and natural resources, and for its environmental benefits in sequestering carbon.

Building Retention and Reuse

- The existing building will be retained for its exterior assemblies, structural systems, and finishes where appropriate.

Transportation

- A parking stall reduction is sought and will encourage the use of alternative transportation.
- Short term bicycle stalls will be located along Hillside AAA bikeway and on Douglas street.
- Douglas Street is located along the Rapid Transit Network.
- Hillside Avenue is located along the Frequent Transit Network.
- A new bus stop will be located along Hillside Avenue in front of the site, as close as operably possible to Douglas Street.
- Located approximately 1km from downtown, the site is well connected to amenities and has received a WalkScore of 92 – “Walker’s Paradise: Daily errands do not require a car.”
- A subsidized transit pass program will be provided for residents of the development.

Energy Efficiency for Part 3 Buildings

- The development will target Step 1 of the BC Step Code

Water

- Low-volume plumbing fixtures will be used.

Site permeability

- Permeable paving and decking will be used at private patios and throughout the hardscaped areas of the internal plaza to facilitate storm water management.

Landscaping and Urban Forest

- No net loss in number of trees.
- Increase overall number of trees.

Urban Agriculture

- Flowering planting will be specified to encourage beneficial insects and support bee population.
- Generous balconies and patios provide opportunities for residents to plant personal potted gardens.

Conclusion

Thank you for reviewing our submission. We appreciate the opportunity to describe the design solutions that have been developed to address the intents of the City of Victoria while delivering a high quality mixed-use development that the owner is proud to bring to the neighborhood. We look forward to further communication with you as the project continues.

Sincerely,

MGA | MICHAEL GREEN ARCHITECTURE INC



Michael Green
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