

November 30, 2015

Mayor Lisa Helps and Members of Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor Helps and Council

Re: 727 Johnson Street

This is a proposal to convert a vacant existing retail/office building to a mixed-use project with retail at the street level and residential units on the upper floors. We have applied for a Heritage Designation and are now looking to proceed with the Rezoning and Development Permit process.

The existing office building is located at Johnson Street mid-block between Douglas & Blanchard Streets. The existing 1910 structure is three storeys tall with no underground or parking on site. The proposed project is in the Downtown Core Central Area Commercial Office District (CA-4 Zone) with potential for density bonus.

Our proposal is to convert the building to include retail on the ground floor and rental residential apartments on the upper floors with a two-storey addition; this adaptive reuse of the existing building responds to the changing urban fabric of live, work and play within the community. The retail on the ground floor will enhance the street level pedestrian experience and provide continuous retail frontage as it connects with the surrounding retail uses. The added residential density on the upper floors will help invigorate the community, making it more lively and safe. The mixed-use approach is often considered to improve the urban living experience, by creating a sustainable synergy between the residents and the surrounding businesses on both the economic & social level.

The proposal looks to restore the historic front façade, restore & preserve the historic structure. Conservation work on the historic façade will be carried out according to the attached Conservation Plan by Donald Luxton & Associates. Although the existing structure is about the same height as the surrounding buildings on the block, the addition will add variety & animate the saw-tooth urban massing profile. The proposed density of 4.27 is within the permitted maximum 6.0 FSR for a mixed use project with the Density Bonus System. This is essential from an economic stand point to offset the costs of the heritage restoration & seismic structural upgrades. A total of 32 rental apartments will be created. The additional two floors will be recessed to accentuate the historic façade as the original street wall.

Ample bicycle storage will be provided for the project to encourage the residents to bike year round. No parking will be provided, given the existing condition. The site is centrally located within walking distance of all amenities as well as a major transit corridor (Douglas Street), and as such will encourage residents to utilize alternate modes of transport.

I thank you for considering this proposal. Attached is a Green Building Items Checklist, Heritage Conservation Plan and a Building Code Compliance Summary for the proposed project.

Regards,