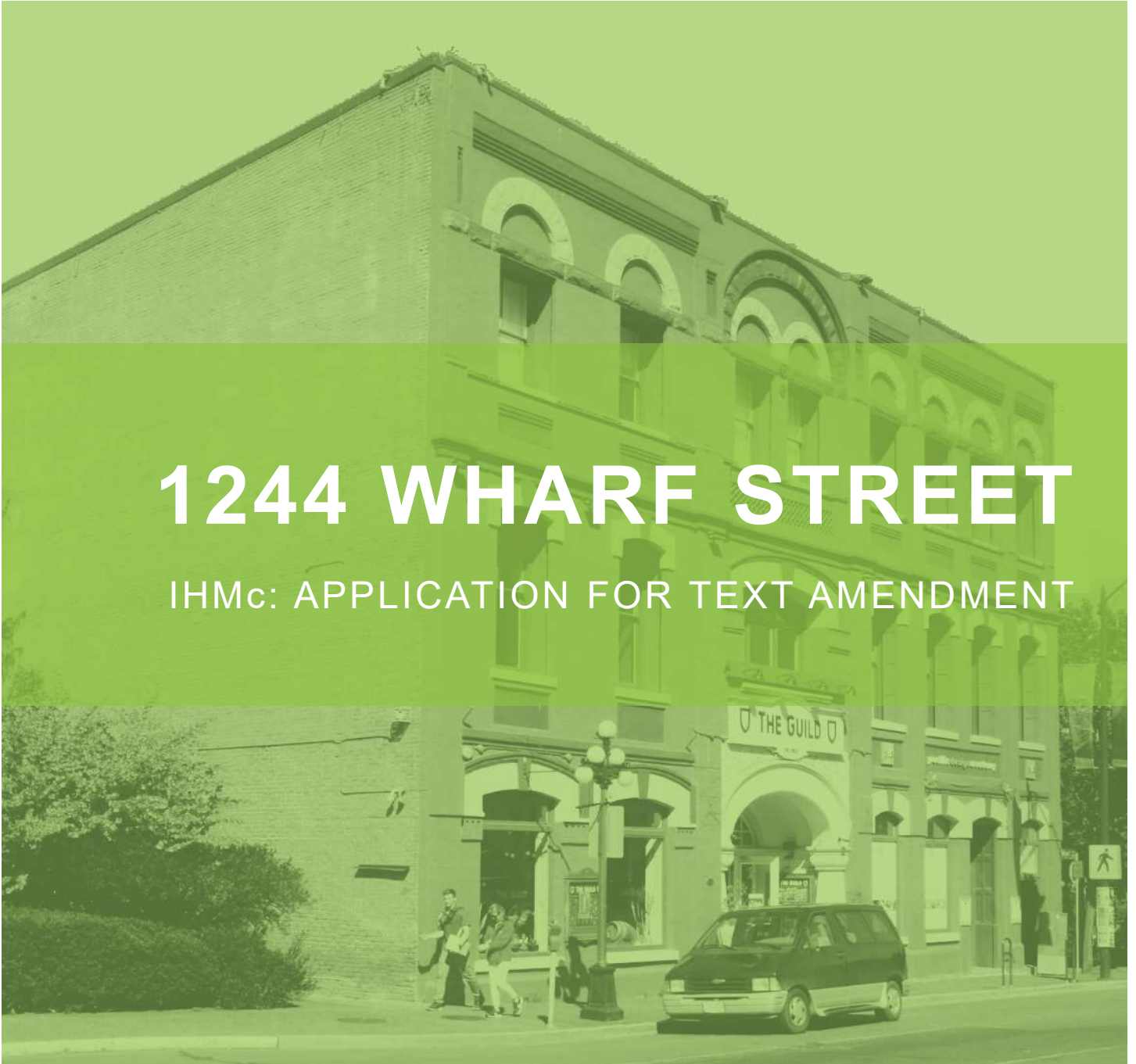


# 1244 WHARF STREET

IHM<sub>c</sub>: APPLICATION FOR TEXT AMENDMENT



May 26th, 2020

City of Victoria  
No.1 Centennial Square  
Victoria BC V8W 1P6

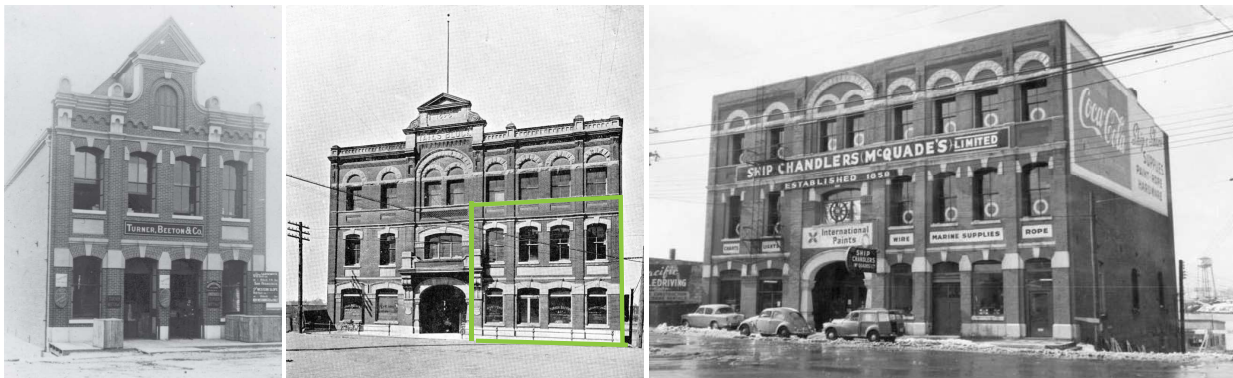
**Attn.: Mayor and Council**  
**RE: Text Amendment Application for 1244 Wharf Street**

Dear Mayor and Council,

Cascadia Architects is pleased to submit this application for a text amendment to the existing zone at 1244 Wharf Street on behalf of The Salient Group (the 'Applicant'). We are confident that this application is aligned with the objectives and policies of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Downtown Core Area Plan (DCAP), and is consistent with all relevant urban place guidelines and design guidelines.

The objective of this application is to create certainty of allowable uses in order to facilitate future works to revitalize and upgrade the existing heritage building on the site. This application does not seek additional storeys to the existing building. The intent for future works will be to work within the existing footprint of the building in order to activate it and contribute to the vibrancy of the area.

In preparing this application, the team has received preliminary input from City Planning staff and guidance from a heritage conservation specialist.



HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE EXISTING BUILDING

## Description of the Proposal

### *Historically Significant Existing Structure*

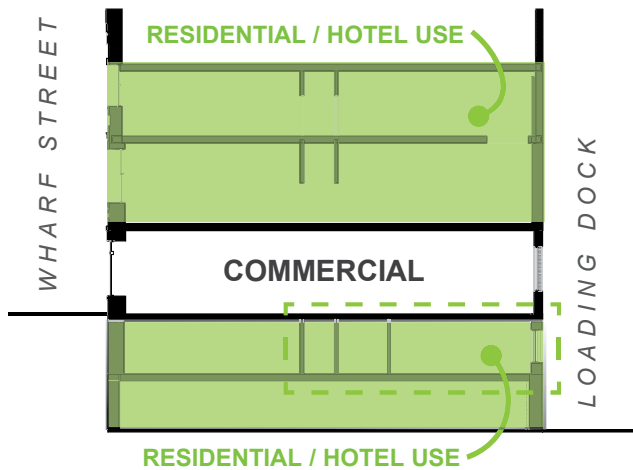
The site is located at the foot of Yates Street on the west side of Wharf Street, flanked by Reeson Park to the north, and the Victoria Regent Hotel to the south and the west. There is an existing dual aspect to the building located on the site, presenting a commercial frontage to Wharf Street and a harbour frontage to the water. The original building, with its rubble masonry foundation, was erected in 1882. Following this, an additional storey was added in 1892, with a large addition to the side in 1896. The random rubble stonework, brick masonry and load bearing masonry details, windows, decorative detailing, and iron shutters and doors, constitute significant character defining elements of the building. This building is compositionally significant to Old Town's layered, small scale historic fabric sloping upward from the water.

### Rezoning Application Rationale

The site is currently underperforming as a meaningful destination within the Inner Harbour. Though it is partially occupied by a professional education centre, more than half of the building sits unoccupied. This proposed text amendment to the existing zone represents the Applicant's first steps in the path to renewing and revitalizing the building's significance in the Downtown Core. It is the Applicant's intention to proceed with an application to the City of Victoria's Tax Incentive Program (TIP) to revitalize and upgrade the property. The result will be the substantial rehabilitation of the site which celebrates the historic qualities of the building through the preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of its exterior, while simultaneously re-activating its use through the extensive renovation of its interior.

With the goal of achieving this aesthetic and functional revitalization, **the Applicant requests a text amendment to the existing IHMc zone to add hotel use to the uses already permitted in the zone, and to allow hotel and residential use *below* the Wharf Street frontage as well as *above* it.** A successful text amendment to the existing zone will align the site zone to the current zoning and uses in the surrounding area and with the objectives of the OCP. Given the uncertain economic environment at this time, it will also provide flexibility of use for the Applicant.

The intent of an approved hotel use will be to work with a hotel group operator. There is no intent to allow the operation of individual short-term vacation rental units, consistent with the City's recent policy updates that preclude short term vacation rentals.



The Applicant has taken care to ensure that the original intent of the zone, to preserve commercial use adjacent to Wharf Street, is retained with this proposed text amendment. Due to the unique site condition of buildings located along the west side of Wharf Street, there are two storeys situated below the Wharf Street frontage. It is our belief that the portion of the level located below Wharf Street oriented to the waterfront is appropriate for residential or hotel use without impacting the continuous commercial street frontage associated with Wharf Street. This is an important element in activating the existing floor area and allowing for new use in this lower portion of the building.

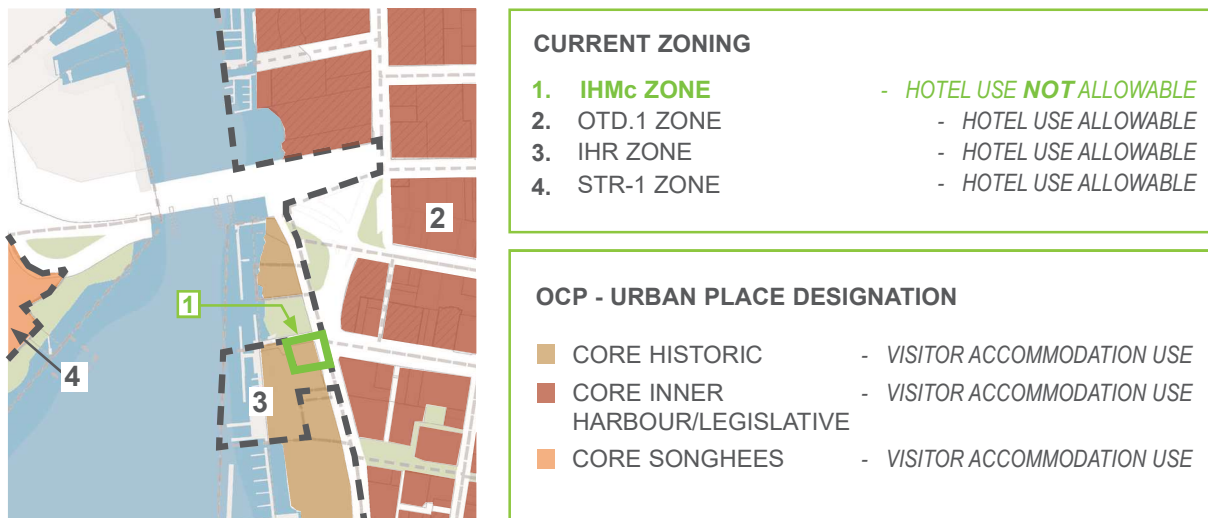
A successful text amendment application will enable the Applicant to further a design and economic analysis with certainty. It should be noted that all future development of this concept will occur within the framework of the City's Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) application process and will utilize the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places as a guide to meaningfully rehabilitate and/or restore the character defining elements of the building. A heritage consultant has already been retained for this project and will continue to provide consultation and direction.

### Government Policies

The broadening of the zone to include hotel use and the associated renewal of the existing building that this rezoning allows is in conformance with the OCP, DCAP, Old Town Design Guidelines, and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places. It supports their policies and objectives, particularly pertaining to the consideration of heritage value, and the perception of heritage property as a resource with value for present and future generations as described in the OCP.

The OCP states that the City of Victoria strives to work with partners to attract jobs, residents and visitors to Victoria by promoting a new image as a vibrant, diverse and creative city in a maritime setting, while retaining the importance of heritage, history and tradition in defining Victoria's character. This proposal provides an excellent opportunity to successfully advance this objective, bringing modern purpose to a historically significant building located along the city's waterfront while simultaneously revitalizing its aesthetic and life safety performance.

The document also supports the clustering of tourist and visitor services in the Inner Harbour and Urban Core via the retention and enhancement of the mix of service, retail, offices, and visitor accommodation (among other uses) in the area, and the strengthening of Victoria's appeal to visitors through the enhancement of an attractive and vibrant waterfront. Again, the introduction of hotel use and the renewal of the existing structure on the 1244 Wharf Street site are in alignment with these objectives based on the site's urban place designation, its proximity to the Inner Harbour, and the existing building's historical significance.



The site, located in the Downtown Core Area, holds a Core Inner Harbour/Legislative Urban Place Designation, and is directly adjacent to the Core Historic Urban Place Designation. Visitor accommodation is one of the supported uses listed within the Urban Place Guidelines for both, which comprise the bulk of the area surrounding the site. There is a mix of zones surrounding 1244 Wharf Street, but many in close proximity to the site also support hotel use. These zones include the Old Town District-1 Zone, the Inner Harbour Regent District Zone, and the Songhees Transient Accommodation Residential District Zone. Amending the existing Inner Harbour McQuade zone to include this hotel use aligns the site with the objectives of the OCP and the zoning intent in the area.

### **Historic Revitalization**

1244 Wharf Street is a heritage designated building. Future works proposed for the property will be pursued as an upgrading and revitalization of the existing historic building to serve two primary purposes.

Firstly, it will conserve and enhance heritage property, improving the visual identity and appearance of the city, both from Wharf Street and the waterfront. It will significantly contribute to the picturesque quality and character of the Inner Harbour District as well as to its economic vitality and vibrancy as

a tourist destination. The rehabilitation of this heritage designated property on a significant site in the Inner Harbour District will create a new tourist attraction and/or facility, supporting the visitors in the area while also contributing to the area's rich sense of place by creating a place that serves both to attract people and to benefit the community. In these ways, the zoning amendment will facilitate the celebration of an important piece of Victoria's architectural heritage and will enhance the Inner Harbour's prominence as a world class destination.

Secondly, the renewal of this historic building will improve its life safety systems, conserving its viability as an important element of the city's urban fabric moving forward. These works include improved fire sprinkler and life safety systems, structural performance, exiting, accessibility, ventilation, electrical distribution, and lighting.

In conclusion, the 1244 Wharf Street site holds significant value as a historic element which contributes to the rich sense of place in the Inner Harbour and the downtown core - however, it is in need of revitalization. We are confident that this text amendment application to existing zoning will provide a critical first step to enabling both a renewal and upgrade of the building, and a new use which will breathe life and vitality into the area as a whole.

In preparing this letter, the team has carefully considered the relevant OCP objectives and associated design guidelines which impact this site. We strongly believe that this text amendment will enable a meaningful contribution to the overall vibrancy of the Downtown Core Area and the Inner Harbour District. If you have any questions or require further clarification of any part of this application, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS INC.



Peter Johannknecht, Architect AIBC, RAIC,  
LEED AP  
Principal



Gregory Damant, Architect AIBC, RAIC,  
LEED AP  
Principal