CASCADIA ARCHITECTS
DAMANT + JOHANNKNECHT

September 4th, 2020
Revised November 18th, 2020

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

Attn.: Mayor & Council

Re: 1244 Wharf Street – Heritage Alteration Permit

Cascadia Architects is pleased to submit this Heritage Alteration Permit application on behalf of The Salient Group (the 'Applicant'). Ongoing consultation with a heritage consultant has ensured this proposal's compliance with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada* and the City of Victoria's Old Town Design Guidelines. These documents have informed the project's design principles and conceptual approach. A Conservation Plan has been submitted as part of this application.

The building is located at the western termination of Yates Street, flanked by Reeson Park to the north, and the Victoria Regent Hotel to the south and the west. There is a dual aspect to the building as located on this site - presenting a three storey commercial frontage to Wharf Street and a five storey harbour frontage to the water. The original building – less than half the size of the current massing - was erected on the northern portion of the site in 1882. Following this, an additional storey was added in 1892, with a large addition to the south in 1896, that brought the building to the zenith, in terms of size and rich architectural expression. Typical to its era, the structure consists of unreinforced masonry (URM) exterior walls with one central URM wall for the three upper floors. Stone foundation walls support the URM walls in all locations on the lower two levels. 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, known as the 'Yates Block' - as it was commissioned for James Yates - was a significant landmark at the foot of Yates Street at the end of the nineteenth century, and an manifestation of the preceding decades of local commercial prosperity that fueled the growth of Victoria as a City. It remains one of only a few surviving reminders of the Victorian-era commercial warehouses that lined the Inner Harbour. Originally constructed as a warehouse for garments and dry goods with Turner, Beeton & Company as the original tenant, the building was then home to W.H. Malkin grocers, and following that, McQuade's Ship Chandlers. The evolving function and physical appearance of the building is a chronicle of the city's changing reliance on the harbour, from shipping to tourism. In more recent history, this building was home to the popular Chandler's Seafood Restaurant, and following that The Guild restaurant, neither of which are still operating. Today, there is a design school that operates in part of the building, but overall, the structure has suffered decades of neglect and needs substantial upgrade and repair.

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS INC
101-804 Broughton Street
Victoria BC, V8W 1E4
Canada

T 250 590 3223

www.cascadiaarchitects.ca
office@cascadiaarchitects.ca

A Corporate Partnership

Principals

GREGORY DAMANT
Architect AIBC, LEED AP

PETER JOHANNKNECHT
Architect AIBC, LEED AP,
Interior Architect AKNW Germany

The Salient Group proposes to rehabilitate the landmark 'Yates Block' building, which is municipally designated and included on the City of Victoria's Heritage Register. The outcome will be the conservation of this significant heritage asset and its adaptive reuse to provide new residential units and updated commercial spaces. By introducing residential use to the upper floors and revitalizing dormant publicly oriented uses on Wharf Street, the building will contribute to Old Town's resident population, street liveliness, and overall economic wellbeing. The introduction of vibrant commercial use at the west face of the building will also provide needed overlook to the rear of the property and will help activate the City's new David Foster walkway. Proposed new works are largely confined to the interior of the building. The existing structure and exterior envelope, including the existing four façades and roof structure will be renewed, with no increase in density, height, or number of storeys.

Design Rationale:

The design intent of this proposal is to restore the stature of this building as a Victorian-era landmark at the foot of Yates Street, and to re-establish it as an integral element of an economically vibrant Old Town, and its ties to the Inner Harbour as the locus of Victoria's identity.

The approach involves primarily the *preservation* of the largely intact fabric of the building facades, particularly the Wharf Street (east) façade, as well as the *restoration* of key character defining elements that coalesced through its evolution from 1882 to 1896, and *rehabilitation* as required to accommodate new uses.
The combined scope of these three initiatives represents a significant investment that will extend the useable life of this building into the next generation, and the result will be an elegant renewal - seismically improved, with fire protection, life safety and interior accessibility to current building code standards - that meaningfully contributes to Victoria's urban fabric.

Preservation
The majority of the building exterior envelope is intact from 1896 and will be preserved through maintenance and repairs-in-kind guided by the conservation plan and the investigations of the Heritage Consultant:

I. The existing painted brick will be repaired and repainted to match the original red brick and grey colours.
II. Existing window frames and sashes will be repaired and repainted in a dark green.
III. The main entrance's coffered wood paneling and door and transom mullions and muntins will be repaired and repainted in the dark green.
IV. Sandstone detailing and ornament on the Wharf Street façade, including the imposing arch and pilasters that frame the entrance, will be cleaned and stripped to the natural finish, adding a level of material quality worthy of the façade's formal composition.
V. At the rear (west elevation) of the building, the windows will be repaired and repainted, and 4 top-level windows that were replaced or removed some time ago, will be replaced in wood to match the original adjacents.
VI. A lone ground-level opening on the north façade, at the corner of Wharf and Yates, is a former window opening, concealed by the mural, but visible in historic photos. If interior construction reveals the original window is intact, it will be opened and repaired, otherwise it will be replaced to match the original windows.
VII. Iron fire-shutters on the lower level west façade windows, and at the north façade doorway on level 2, will be retained, repaired, and repainted.
VIII. The stone foundations will be cleaned of dirt and organic growth.

IX. The north elevation of the building, which is a brick wall clad with stucco and features a 1986 mural by artist Robert Wyland is deteriorated visually and structurally. The design team is currently working with a building envelope specialist to investigate measures to address the preservation and technical performance of the masonry wall and the stucco coating behind the mural as this is a priority for maintaining the building condition. The final solution for the wall has not been determined but based on its current condition, the introduction of new openings in the wall, and the need to repair and rehabilitate the protective stucco layer, it is anticipated that the mural will not be retained in the current iteration. On this basis, and for the purpose of the heritage alteration application, the wall is shown as a neutral painted element to match the building.

Restoration

The intent of this proposal is not to restore the building to its appearance at a fixed point in time, given that its most fulsome architectural character emerged from the accretion of several significant additions and alterations. Rather, the intention is to restore its character and stature, and renew it for the 21st century. Central to that effort is the restoration of the painted metal pediment and cornice which gave the Wharf Street façade its sense of significance and authority. This element will be restored by recreation in painted metal to replicate the original, based on historic photos, and as guided by the Heritage Consultant. Additionally, the existing doorway at the northeast corner on Wharf Street will be removed and the window, stone sill, and brick wall restored to the 1896 condition.

Rehabilitation

Exterior alterations are required in limited areas to accommodate new access points and uses within the building. In keeping with the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, where significant new program and use occurring within the building require the introduction of new architectural elements to the exterior, the new work is physically and visually compatible with, subordinate to, and distinguishable from the existing building.

In order to address this requirement, the design team has adopted a logic and architectural language to clearly separate new works from old in a way that expresses the technologies and architectural sensibilities of the 21st century while remaining sympathetic to the existing composition. This is entirely in keeping with the ways in which architects John Teague and Alexander Ewart expanded and adapted the architectural composition of the original 1882 building to accommodate the rapidly growing business tenants between its opening and 1896.

Where new windows and doors are added, they are set in a Corten (or rusted-) steel liner and finished to match that material, limiting the introduction of new materials to the steel and glass. Corten is a material that has a timeless quality and patina, and it blends well with rustic finishes. It also can be manufactured with sharp precision, inserting a lean and light structural expression that is distinct from the heavy masonry of the building's envelope. Changes related to rehabilitation of the building program include:

I. Reinstating entrances at the north end of the Wharf Street elevation, to access the restaurant / bar space and the residential lobby, in what were the central front door archways of the original 1882 building. Reverting to the original doorway configuration serves to create level access to the residential lobby and elevator, and to the north restaurant space. More importantly, this composition highlights the localized symmetry of the original façade that still is evident within the overall building and reveals how the building's composition evolved over time in a more purposeful way. Because these doors have never existed in this configuration in the building the way it stands now, they are treated with the Corten liner, marking them as clearly new interventions. Reflecting

comments of staff and the HAPL, the steel elements are connected to the masonry arches by wood casing and transom windows that match the rest of the ground level storefront windows. In this way the 1896 composition of the overall façade is strengthened and completed again, reinforcing that dominant character-defining period and architecture.

II. New signage, to be located above the main arched entry, will be rendered in Corten steel with back-lit lettering, and held proud of the building to avoid concealing the original building fabric, and to clearly mark it as new construction.

III. At the north façade, new window openings are created to accommodate uses within the building. At the upper levels, a small residential unit at each floor will rely on these windows for access to light and air. In these cases the Corten liner is extruded and the glass pushed out to the face of the steel, to create a window seat on the interior for the unit - an important piece of character and luxury for a compact residence. Angled toward the harbour they also create a poetic link to the harbour economy and activity as a key element of Victoria's identity. At the Wharf Street level, a large horizontal, Corten-lined window will create a wonderful view, framing the Johnson Street bridge and harbour for the restaurant or bar inside, while broadcasting the character and life inside to pedestrians on the David Foster walkway. In this case the glass will be pushed in to reveal the solid nature of the brick and the opening oriented to consciously draw the link from the building life to the harbour activity. Structural supports for the wide opening will be arranged behind the glass, weather-protected, and be spaced to mimic the proportions and rhythm of the original windows that dot the east and west facades.

IV. At the west elevation, a new patio deck in a light Corten steel frame and glass guardrail will accommodate outdoor dining. Again, the steel marks the addition as contemporary, but the proportions and materiality are sympathetic to the west elevation on which it hangs. The structure is designed to accommodate canopies and awnings for extended seasonal use without alteration of the design intent.

V. At the south elevation, windows for residential units are added in a similar fashion to the north wall. However, in this case, the glazed panels and steel liners are recessed in the new openings, to clearly reveal the depth of masonry, as noted by HAPL, and to provide shading to the south facing windows. A window at the restaurant level is treated the same way.

VI. At the east, north and west facades, new accent lighting is added to polish the building's nighttime appearance and address CPTED criteria. In most cases the lighting fixtures will be concealed by the building's ornamental cornices or contained within the new Corten elements such as the patio, in order to avoid marking the building fabric. Where visible fixtures are used, such as the Wharf Street spring blocks on the pilasters, they are minimal and refined in design, focusing attention on the lit rhythm of the building pilasters rather than on the lights themselves. At the north elevation, such lighting will give a much warmer and friendlier pedestrian experience of the narrow existing and dark sidewalk, and positively influence Reeson Park. Concealed strip lighting will be incorporated into the Corten liners at the north façade which are oriented to continuously illuminate the wall behind.

These new elements are distinctly modern in their detailing and architectural language. They are subtle, understated, and deferential in relation to the historic structure, but clearly record a new layer of use over the 1882, '92 and '96 and adds to the character and interconnected histories of the building, Old Town, and the Inner Harbour.

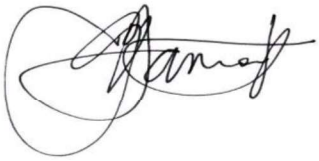
Victoria's Official Community Plan states that the City strives to work with partners to attract jobs, residents and visitors to Victoria by promoting a new image as a vibrant, diverse and creative city in a maritime setting, while retaining the importance of heritage, history and tradition in defining Victoria's character. This proposal provides an excellent

opportunity to successfully advance this objective, as the existing building contributes to the rich sense of place in the downtown core, but is currently underperforming as a meaningful destination in the Inner Harbour and is in need of revitalization. It is our belief that the works described in this Heritage Alteration Permit application will successfully restore the building's prominence and vitality, celebrating its historic significance while imbuing it with new purpose in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS INC.





Peter Johannknecht, Architect AIBC, RAIC, LEED AP
Principal

Gregory Damant, Architect AIBC, RAIC, LEED AP
Principal