



Wiser Projects

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City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

March 17, 2021

RE: Development Variance Permit for 1210 Topaz Avenue

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Khalsa Diwan Society of Victoria (“the Society”) regarding the Sikh Temple located at 1210 Topaz Avenue. The Temple, originally built in 1969, recently received provincial funding to renovate the building to improve the experience of community members using the facilities. The renovation is primarily to accommodate the growing Sikh community and update important features. The kitchen is being expanded, as is the front of the building to accommodate the men’s and women’s shoe rooms. The front entrance has been expanded to provide larger gathering space for weddings. The kitchen expansion is especially important to the Society, as it is used by volunteers in the Sikh community to prepare food to be donated to Our Place Society, as well as to the Red Cedar Café during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

These renovations/changes have triggered the need for a Development Variance Permit, primarily a parking variance and several setback variances. We believe that these variances are supportable and will result in little significant change to the design, character, and impact of the building on the surrounding properties and streets. Additionally, dealing with these variances now are rectifying several historical issues and will bring the site into compliance with City of Victoria policies.

A Building Permit application was previously submitted for this project, but response from staff indicated a need for review. Most outstanding issues can be resolved via the BP, but several require a DVP. The variances requested through this DVP are as follows:

Table 1: Summary of Variances requested

	Required	Provided	Variance Requested
Parking	36 Stalls	35 stalls	1 stall
Setbacks - rear yard	25% of Lot Depth or 18.3m	6.7m (non-conforming)	11.6m
Setbacks - interior side yard	10% of lot width or 4.974	2.3m / 0.795m	4.179m



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- **A 1 stall parking variance.** 36 stalls are required for this site, and 35 have been provided. This variance is required for several reasons: a slight reconfiguration of parking to allow for renovations/an addition to the building, and to better align the parking configuration with non-conforming rights from 1969 plans and Schedule C, where the 1969 plans cannot be met. We believe the variance is justifiable because parking has historically not been an issue at this site. When overflow parking is required, patrons will often use street parking, but there have been no reports of this being an issue with neighbours or the wider community.
- **A 4.179m setback variance on the interior side yard (east side of the building) and a 11.6m setback variance for the rear yard (Topaz Ave).** Setbacks on both these side were historically nonconforming. Granting the requested setbacks would rectify the historical issue as well as allow for the required renovations. These variances will have little to no impact on neighbouring properties or on the street/pedestrian experience.

Rectifying historic issues will bring the site plans for the Temple into better alignment with City of Victoria policies, and we believe the requested variances are justifiable due to their minimal impacts on the site and on neighbours. The Society is eager to complete these renovations, as it will allow them to refocus efforts on some of their community service activities, such as food preparation for Victoria's homeless population and providing affordable housing rentals in the neighbourhood. Several of their properties in the neighbourhood require updating, which will be pursued after the Temple renovations are complete.

Thank you for considering this application.

Sincerely,

Kaeley Wiseman

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