

**Letter to Mayor and Council****August 11, 2023****City of Victoria**

1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Mayor Marianne Alto
Members of City Council
City of Victoria

Dear Mayor and Council,

**Re: Proposed Temporary Use Permit as
“Short Term Vacation Rental” for the “Fan Tan Hotel”:
at “539-545 ½ Fisgard St and 16-20 Fan Tan Alley”**

On behalf of Fisgard Street Holdings Ltd, we are pleased to enclose the Temporary Use Permit Application for the “Short Term Vacation Rental” use of the “Fan Tan Hotel” in the property at 539-545 ½ Fisgard Street + 16-20 Fan Tan Alley.

These premises have been renovated with the intent of becoming a unique, historically experiential hotel, the use and occupancy for which has been approved, and the business license has been issued for. Just prior to receiving the first guests, we have since been notified that the City has determined that Fan Tan Hotel does not satisfy the definition of “Hotel”. We have been asked to submit this Temporary Use Permit application to provide for operation of the Fan Tan Hotel while the City resolves the policy context under which this confusion exists. We are pleased to provide the following summary, context and explanation of the Fan Tan Hotel.

THE BUILDING:

Victoria’s Chinatown is a unique and special place. Recognized as a National Historic Site comprising almost 5-city blocks of area, the portion of Chinatown that is widely seen and understood has been reduced to the east half of the 500-block of Fisgard Street. This half block contains the oldest cluster of original standing Chinatown buildings in North America.

The buildings at 539-541 ½ Fisgard and 543-545 ½ Fisgard, originally built by Lee Mong Kow (1901) and Sheam Tip + Low Yan San (1888) respectively, comprise 2/3 of the current property (together with 16-20 Fan Tan Alley) which has been continuously owned and operated comprehensively since 1949. Currently undergoing a comprehensive renovation and restoration aspiring to reinvigorate Chinatown socially, culturally, and economically through authentic and accurate reconstruction, this property now has the potential to significantly strengthen the Chinese cultural heritage and identity of this area.

The restoration of the building has included “Green” building outcomes, which include the retention of the historic buildings, diverting a substantial amount of material from dump sites. Most of the aged fossil fuel heating system has been removed and replaced with electricity-based systems and the roof is being



insulated to reduce heat loss as part of the seismic upgrade through rebuilding of the roof structure. The seismic upgrade includes a seismic roof diaphragm, reinforcing the cornice, balconies, parapets and chimneys, and stabilizing the masonry construction of the building. Life safety has been significantly increased through the addition of a sprinkler system and modernized fire alarm system.

THE HOTEL:

The Fan Tan Hotel allows guests an unprecedented opportunity to “feel” the history of this special place. The richness and authenticity of the retained architectural fabric, both interior and exterior, combined with the personal histories of the former occupants and the businesses that occupied these spaces, allows guests immersive participation in a vibrant past.

As a limited-service hotel, in which the extent of services provided are “as requested” by guests, the Fan Tan Hotel will provide access to the same types of services provided by other limited-service hotels such as Sonder, Homewood Suites by Hilton, Fairfield Inn, Executive Suites hotels, Summerfield Suites etc. Limited-service hotels are currently the fastest growing segment of the hotel industry. Like the above brands, The Fan Tan Hotel suites include fully functional and outfitted kitchens, enabling flexibility and options for how and where guests spend their time and money during their stay.

The Fan Tan Hotel provides guests with access to the suites through individual street-level front doors, consistent with many hotels that have direct access to suites. This is commonly seen in exterior access to motels, or Hotels like “Il Borro” in which portions of an historic Italian hill-town have been adapted as a unique, heritage-based hotel.

In summary, The Fan Tan Hotel is unique in its location, yet will function like many other boutique hotel offerings in Victoria and worldwide. The Fan Tan Hotel is poised to offer a truly unprecedented accommodation experience for visitors to Victoria, combining the amenities and services of a traditional hotel in an intimate, micro-hotel woven into the history and cultural fabric of Chinatown.

We are requesting the approval of this Temporary “Short Term Vacation Rental” Use permit, for the maximum duration of 3-years, to allow for the City to resolve the discrepancies between the STVR requested use, and the desired, previously approved, “Hotel” use.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you have any questions or comments.

Yours truly,
SALIENT PROJECTS (2016) LTD

Robert Fung
President

