

March 6th, 2024

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

Attn.: Mayor & Council

Re: 1885 Government Street Rezoning, Development Permit Application

We are pleased to submit our upcoming Rezoning and Development Permit Application for 1885 Government Street (the "Site") on behalf of Nicola Wealth Real Estate (the 'Applicant'). The details contained within this application have been carefully crafted to respect the spirit and intent of the Official Community Plan and the Downtown Core Area Plan. Thoughtful, iterative design processes have shaped the form and character of this development proposal (the "Proposal" or the "Project"). This Project is contextually appropriate and poised to enhance and harmonize the evolving fabric of the city in this location.

Existing Site Context & Heritage Component:

Situated at the intersection of Government Street and Chatham Street, the Site is presently occupied by Victoria Transmission and AutoCare. Located in the Downtown Core, the OTD-1 Zone currently regulates the site, permitting multi-unit residential uses with a maximum height of 15 metres and a floor space ratio (FSR) of 3:1. The Official Community Plan designates the site as Core Historic, endorsing multi-unit residential and mixed-use buildings with an FSR of approximately 3:1 and a height allowance of approximately 5 storeys.

Amidst the ongoing transformations in this area of the city, the Site is situated in a context of active change. It is flanked on both sides by the Spencer Block development, a 278-unit mixed-use rental residential project also executed and owned by Nicola Wealth Real Estate which is currently under construction. The site is diagonally opposite the Capital Culture District Comprehensive Development, a large-scale development ranging from 3-20 storeys that is undergoing municipal approvals.

Located in Victoria's downtown, home to a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, the Site is highly walkable and well serviced by a range of amenities including restaurants, cafes, and small-scale retail shops. This level of walkability and liveability is further emphasized by the Site's direct adjacency to the envisioned arts and innovation district, and



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A Corporate Partnership

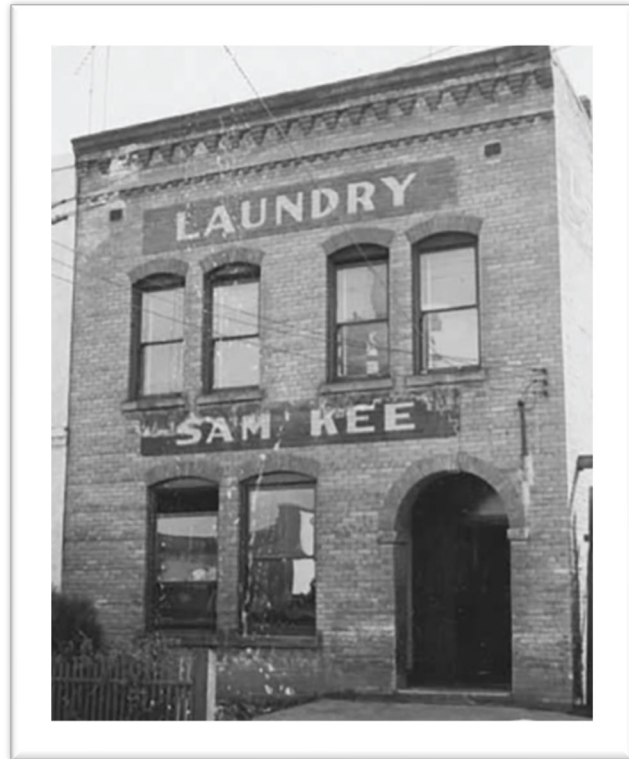
Principals

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its location along Government Street, a well serviced transit and dedicated biking corridor forming a central branch of the city's All Ages and Abilities Cycling Network. The combination of these factors creates the foundation for a vibrant, distinctive urban neighbourhood with rich opportunities for social and commercial growth.

An existing two storey masonry structure, constructed in 1908 and referred to as the 'Sam Kee Laundry building,' is located on the Site, actively functioning as part of the Victoria Transmission and Autocare operations. Donald Luxton & Associates has completed a Statement of Significance which assesses this structure and identifies the building as having heritage significance as an example of Edwardian-era architecture within the cultural landscape of Victoria's Chinatown.



Historic Photograph of On-Site Sam Kee Laundry Building

Description of Proposal:

This Development Proposal envisions the creation of a six-storey building, encompassing 5,504 sq.m. of gross floor area with a density of 4.1. The design includes 79 purpose-built rental residential units and a continuous frontage of commercial space at street level along both Government Street and Chatham Street. A key aspect of the Proposal is the preservation, restoration, and heritage designation of the existing two-storey masonry Sam Kee Laundry building on the site. The rehabilitation and adaptive re-use of this structure serves as the central concept guiding site planning, massing, and architectural expression for the Project. The Project proposes a partial parkade accessed via the adjacent Spencer Block drive aisle on Chatham Street, providing 11 vehicle parking spaces and 88 long term bicycle stalls (8 at grade cargo bike stalls and 81 standard stalls below grade). Sixteen short term bicycle parking stalls are located adjacent to the primary residential entrance.

This Proposal delivers much needed purpose-built rental housing in a vibrant up and coming area of the downtown core, supporting the City's efforts to provide a range of housing types, forms and tenures across the city while embracing its walkable, bikeable, and amenity-rich location. Its continuous animated commercial frontage will function to extend the retail and pedestrian oriented character of Government Street, enhancing the public realm of the downtown core. In conjunction with the adjacent Spencer Block redevelopment, this Project will 'complete' the traditional perimeter block pattern appropriate to the area in an architectural language that is sympathetic and responsive to its current and future contexts as well as its historical framework.

Design Approach:

The design approach adopts a simple and understated architectural expression, featuring a three-part façade (top, middle, base) approach and an historically-referential language of vertically oriented structural bays clad in a warm, dark brick along both the Government Street and Chatham Street elevations in balance with matte bronze metal accents at balconies, cornices and overhangs. Along Government Street an alternating rhythm of balcony and glazing positioning which shifts floor to floor introduces a human scaled rhythm which emphasizes the residential nature of the building's upper floors and animates the long side of the building. The inspiration for this shifting pattern is drawn from the composition of the Sam Kee Laundry building, whose window positions are similarly expressed. The building's simple massing is cut back at its northern elevation, allowing for full depth projecting balconies which punctuate the building's corners at its northern edge, reducing the building's perceived width and providing a visual point of emphasis at the intersection of Government Street and Chatham Street.



View from Government & Chatham Street

Along Chatham Street, where the building comes into direct visual proximity with the Sam Kee building, the shifting window and balcony patterning transitions to a simple vertically aligned expression, allowing the historic structure to become the focal point of this elevation. The building mass slides more than 10 metres back from the Chatham facing facade of the Sam Kee building, and 7 meters from its Government Street facing side elevation, creating an eddy in the public realm and a recess in the street wall condition. The generous setback from the Sam Kee building creates a natural hierarchy between the heritage and six storey structure. The massing relief enriches the Public Realm along Chatham Street showcasing and prioritizing the Sam Kee building. This shift in massing creates a natural courtyard for the historic structure to occupy between the proposed on-site six storey structure and the adjacent Spencer Block development, highlighting and celebrating the Chatham facing and Government Street facing elevations of the Sam Kee building.



View from Chatham Street



Pedestrian View of Residential Entrance and Internal Courtyard

A reveal transitions the building mass where it extends to the east property line, carrying the bronze accent colour down the face of the building and emphasizing the primary residential entrance, set in the heart of the courtyard space adjacent to an outdoor patio area for the proposed commercial space in the Sam Kee building. By locating the residential entrance in the courtyard, the brick sidewall of the historic building becomes the backdrop to the everyday experience of the building's residents. In combination with the proposed outdoor patio space, planters, and bicycle parking, this design strategy prioritizes the animation and vibrancy of both the courtyard and the historic structure, while enhancing the overall public realm.



View of the Public Realm Along Chatham Street

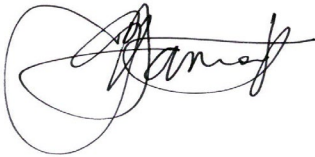
This site planning strategy forms the central tenet of the Proposal's design concept, supporting and advancing goals and objectives of the Official Community Plan, Old Town Design Guidelines, and Downtown Core Area Plan & Design Guidelines. It allows for high quality architecture and diversity in design that balances the heritage value and character of the area, adaptively re-using and permanently protecting an existing historic structure, and enhancing and animating the public realm. The Proposal enhances the unique and rich heritage of Old Town, contributing to its human scale character and strengthening the cohesiveness of the area with a design that maintains and respects the authenticity of the existing heritage structure and existing historical contexts. Through the introduction of a feature courtyard space, the concept references and reinforces the network of courtyards, squares, and alleys which are characteristic of Victoria's Old Town, while the Proposal's material palette simultaneously complements its immediate adjacencies and respects and acknowledges its location on the edge of the Chinatown sub area.

Conclusion:

The Proposal for 1885 Government Street reflects a considerate and thoughtful design approach that aligns with policy objectives put forward by the City of Victoria. By preserving and revitalizing the historically significant Sam Kee Laundry building, the project pays homage to the city's heritage and contributes to the evolving urban fabric of Old Town. Seventy-nine new units of purpose-built rental housing stock are put forward with this Proposal triggering zero displacement of existing tenants. The Proposal's continuous commercial frontage enhances and extends the pedestrian-oriented character of Government Street while the restored heritage structure and courtyard provide a strong sense of identity and activation along Chatham Street. In summary, this Proposal's uses, architectural language, massing, and site circulation approach culminate to create a project that is highly attuned to its spatial, cultural, and historical contexts, contributing meaningfully to the built environment. We look forward to further steps with the City of Victoria regarding this Proposal. If you have any questions or require clarification of any part of this application, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory Damant', written in a cursive style.

Gregory Damant, Architect AIBC LEED AP
Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Johannknecht', written in a cursive style.

Peter Johannknecht, Architect AIBC, LEED AP
Principal