

February 9, 2017

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Dear Mayor and Council,

**Re: 345 Quebec Street – Rezoning and Development Permit Application to
Convert a 13 Storey Hotel to Rental Apartments**

We are proposing to convert the existing 13 storey Harbour Towers Hotel into residential rental apartments. Currently the hotel is operating with 189 hotel rooms on levels 3-12 and in the lower podium (Ground and 2nd Floor) there is 18,661 ft² of meeting space and 15,000 ft² of vacant office space (5,000 ft² of which was recently converted to meeting space) as well as a restaurant, pool, gym and reception desk. There are 177 off-street parking stalls available on 2 levels of underground parking and a surface parking lot west of the tower. The building is currently zoned T-1 (Transient Residential) and we are applying to rezone to Residential to allow rental.

The conversion would involve demolition of a section of the lower two floors along the south and west side to create an interior courtyard with entrances off of Quebec Street and Oswego Street. The pool would be retained and would be open through full height glazing to the new interior landscaped courtyard. The new residential units on the Ground and Second floor would open onto either the new courtyard or Quebec Street. Floors 3-13 will be reconfigured into Studio, 1 bed, 1.5 bed and 2 bed rental units varying in size from 26m² to 122m² with two level apartments on the 12th Floor. There will be a total of 219 dwelling units, 179 off-street parking stalls, 219 Class 1 bicycle stalls, a bicycle repair station and 1- Class 2 six bicycle rack. Each dwelling unit will be provided with storage either in a locker in the below grade area or within the unit.

This project will help to address a need for rental housing in Victoria and the James Bay Neighbourhood. Rental vacancy rates in the City of Victoria are 0.5% and the projected job growth in the Capital Region between 2012 and 2022 is projected at 14,736. The conversion conforms to the OCP as the area is already a mix of Residential and Transient Residential. The direct benefits to the neighbourhood

OMICRON
ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING
CONSTRUCTION LTD.

Fifth Floor Three Bentall Centre
595 Burrard Street PO Box 49369
Vancouver BC V7X 1L4 Canada

T 604 632 3350
1 877 632 3350
F 604 632 3351
W omiconae.com

Principals

Kevin Hanvey Architect AIBC
Cameron J. Kemp P. Eng.
Tim Loo P. Eng. C.P.
Ivica Marinic Architect AIBC
Alexander Riffin P. Eng.
George R. Sawatzky ASCE
Bill Tucker P. Eng.
Doug Vincent P. Eng. C.P.
Pablo Yuste Architect AIBC

include; the introduction of 219 new rental units, improved views from neighbouring properties with lower floor windows on the south and west property line being infilled and the introduction of a new landscaped courtyard where there is currently a lower roof with large mechanical rooftop units, a new more inviting streetscape along Quebec Street and Oswego Street, an increase in off-street parking and a reduction in large vehicle traffic and noise.

Given that the form and massing of the building are existing, the proposed renovations have included the following design elements to address the Design Guidelines for: Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial, July 2012:

Area-wide context and transition between areas

- The existing building has a lower podium (two storey at west end and one storey at east) that provides a transition in its form and massing to the lower and smaller scale residential buildings adjacent to the south and west.
- We are improving privacy to the adjoining properties by infilling the existing glazing on the south and west property line on the Ground and Second floor. This will have a positive impact on the privacy of the lower floor units of the Oswego Hotel, 314/324 Kingston Street and 515 Pendray Street.

Streetscape, relationship to the street and orientation

- There are variations in height along Quebec Street as the building steps from one storey to two storeys as you move west.
- The new façade along Quebec Street and Oswego Street introduces new glazing and modern durable finishes.
- As a corner property the new finishes contribute to the streetscape on both Quebec Street and Oswego Street.
- The renovated building is better oriented to the street with new suite entrances to the Ground floor suites off of the sidewalk on Quebec Street as well as a new courtyard entrance on both Quebec Street and Oswego Street. These entrances provide views from the street into the new landscaped courtyard. The courtyard will be a vibrant gathering place for residents and will feature amenities such as a pool, hot-tub, seating and a covered barbeque area.

Human scale, massing, height and architectural features

- The podium base along Quebec Street and Oswego Street is being re-clad with modern durable finishes articulated with new glazing and suite entrances.
- Design elements from adjacent buildings are being incorporated where possible such as the aluminum and glass guardrails on the Oswego Hotel
- The dated arches at the top of the tower and curved glass canopy at the main entrance are being replaced with more contemporary linear elements.
- All garbage and recycling will be stored below grade and will not be visible from the street. The gas meter located at the northwest corner of the suite is screened from view.

- A large section of the podium along the south and west side of the building is being demolished to create a new interior courtyard that will provide natural light to the lower suites and a gathering place for tenant activities. The courtyard will have direct access to the pool and hot-tub.
- All existing balconies will be retained and the second floor suites will have a walkway overlooking the courtyard.

Exterior finishes

- High quality durable finishes capable of weathering gracefully will be incorporated along the street. New finishes include brick, metal panel and EIFS. New double glazed thermally broken windows will be installed at the podium. The glazing will be clear except for a slight tint from the low E layer of glass. This will allow as much light as possible into the units. Courtyard exterior walls will receive similar finishes.
- The tower finishes will remain the same; however, the brick will be stained and sealed and the stucco will be repaired and painted. All new double glazed sliders and punch windows will be installed in the existing locations in the tower.
- New dark coloured aluminum and glass guardrails will be installed at all balconies. These will be similar in colour and style to the guardrails on the neighbouring Oswego Hotel.

Open spaces and landscaping

- A portion of the podium will be demolished to create an L-shaped interior courtyard on the south and west side of the tower. This will allow units to open onto the courtyard, access natural light and provide opportunities for landscaping and open spaces.
- The landscape design includes plant material that is commonly used in projects in the Victoria area. We have considered site specific conditions (specifically the requirement for planters/raised beds only) when choosing tree species; we have included small deciduous trees that have success in container planting conditions. The planting scheme provides seasonal interest and considers natural light levels around the site.
- All of the existing trees and boulevard along Quebec Street and Oswego Street will be preserved during construction.

Lighting

- Both the building face and the courtyard will be down-lit with building mounted fixtures and have good cut-off to prevent light pollution.
- All new lighting will utilize energy efficient LED sources.

Universal accessible design and safety

- Due to an existing step in the Ground floor a lift is required to access the elevator lobby. The elevators provide access to all floors (P-3 through 11). There is no universal access to the 12th floor due to an existing step in the floor.
- There is access to the landscaped courtyard from Quebec Street and Oswego Street via a ramp and there is access from the courtyard to the Ground floor elevator lobby. The new ramp off of Quebec Street is integrated into the courtyard landscaping.
- Lighting and security will be improved in all below grade areas and in the new courtyard.
- New windows along Quebec Street will provide "eyes on the street".

Parking

- Only 24 of the 179 off-street parking stalls are surface parking. The surface parking lot, located at the northwest corner of the site, will get a new membrane and concrete topping. The surface parking lot is fenced along the property line and screened from the street.
- The entrance to the underground parking is located on Oswego Street. The entrance is set back from the street and a new security gate will be installed. The entrance to the surface parking is off of Pendray Street.
- All bicycle parking will be located below grade except for the Class 2 rack that will be located at the Oswego Street entrance to the courtyard.
- 219 secure bicycle parking stalls will be provided to promote cycling as an alternate mode of transportation.

Access and circulation

- The driveway entrances to the underground parking and surface parking exist and will not be re-configured as part of this project.
- The main building entrance and courtyard entrances will be free of vehicle traffic.

Loading and service areas, ancillary mechanisms and unenclosed storage

- Access to on-site loading and service areas will be off of Oswego Street. Service vehicles under 2.0 m in height will have access to the underground parking. Larger service vehicles can use the surface parking lot off of Pendray Street. All tenant loading will be via the Oswego Street entrance to the underground parking and all loading will be via the elevator lobby on the P1 level.
- All of the existing large roof top units located on the lower (podium) roof will be removed and no large RTU's will be installed. Any mechanical units located on the upper roof will not be visible above the parapet from any neighbouring buildings.
- The electrical meter is not visible from the street and the gas meter is contained in a screened enclosure at the northwest end of the surface parking lot.

Prior to the CALUC meeting we had two meetings with the James Bay Community Association (JBICA) Executive to discuss our proposed conversion. The two issues that came out of the meetings were; the ratio of off-street parking stalls/unit and the need to address the closed off nature of the existing building to Quebec Street.

To address the parking and bicycle parking issue we engaged Bunt and Associates to conduct a Parking Demand Study and provide recommendations on off-street parking, bicycle parking and other Transportation Demand Management measures. Their study was based on data gathered from 13 rental buildings in James Bay or adjacent to James Bay in 2012. Their recommendation was to use a ratio of 0.65 stalls per unit plus 0.05 stalls/unit of visitor parking for a total of 153 stalls. They also recommended 219 Class 1 bicycle stalls and a bicycle repair station. The JBICA felt this was not sufficient but understood that we are working with an existing building with limited area to be shared between parking, bicycle parking and tenant storage. They felt that if we could achieve a parking ratio of at least 0.8 it may be supportable. We reconfigured the below grade areas and were able to achieve 179 parking stalls

for a ratio of 0.81 and provide 219 bicycle parking stalls. This is what was presented at the CALUC meeting. Although this is well below the current Schedule C ratio of 1.3, it should be noted that the building is on the border of the Core Area and based on the Proposed (Draft) Schedule C on the City's web site for the Core Area this building would require 141 parking stalls. The proposed rental building would eliminate the traffic and noise associated with large truck deliveries and tour/team buses arriving at the front entrance on Quebec Street often in the evenings. It would also greatly reduce surges in traffic volume associated with the start and end of large conferences.

In order to open the building up to the neighbourhood we have created new Ground floor apartments with entrances off of Quebec Street and the entire podium will be re-clad with new modern finishes and new glazing. The new interior landscaped courtyard will open to both Quebec Street and Oswego Street and a new ramp will provide handicapped access to the courtyard and Ground floor apartments. The tower will also have exterior improvements and updates including all new low E double glazing, new aluminum and glass guardrails and new exterior colours. The drawings and presentation were well received at the CALUC meeting and most responses were positive and in support of the project.

Upgrades to the building will include improvements to life safety and energy performance. The renovated building will be fully sprinklered (currently only the Parking levels, Ground and 2nd Floor are sprinklered), have a new fire alarm system, new fire rated doors on the exit stairs and improved accessibility. Energy efficient lighting and low flow plumbing fixtures will be used throughout and the mechanical systems will be replaced with new higher efficiency systems. Safety in the below grade areas will be improved through the addition of a security gate, improved lighting levels and cameras. The new courtyard will add landscaping and create a community gathering/socializing space for the tenants.

We seek your support for this project as we feel it addresses the needs of both the City and the Neighbourhood by providing much needed rental units of varying sizes and a new vibrant residential community more connected to its neighbours.

Yours truly,

OMICRON ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION LTD.



Doug Vincent, P. Eng., CP, LEED AP
Principal