

1501 – Douglas Street

The Royal Bank of Canada – Douglas Street Branch

Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The historic place is a one-storey, flat-roofed, international style stone, aluminum and glass bank opposite Victoria City Hall in Victoria's downtown

Heritage Value

Built in 1955 for the Royal Bank of Canada, the value of this building is associated with its progressive architectural style which was commonly commissioned by banking institutions in the post war era. It is valued as one of a small number of commercial structures of the modern International style remaining in downtown Victoria.

Designed in the international style by the Royal Bank of Canada's Montreal - based chief architect E. P. Warren (with construction supervised by local architects Wade, Stockdill, and Armour), the historic place is a modernist allusion to the nineteenth -century temple bank whose architecture was chosen to convey permanence and stability, and more practically was strong and secure.

The bold use of a 'colonnade' of aluminum curtain wall – a distant echo of the encircling colonnade – is a good example of the International style that revered classicism and yet embraced new technology, materials and constructional capabilities.

Built in 1955, and replacing a modest Classical 'temple-fronted' bank building on the adjacent lot to the north (a fragment of which survives), the choice of the clean lines of Modernism for the new building reflects the bank's strategic direction, implying forward thinking and stability. Built in an age of banking prosperity when many financial institutions consolidated their historical cache, the Royal Bank chose to engage the post-depression consumer with an icon of the modern age. The Royal Bank of Canada's Douglas Street branch is also representative of the final manifestation of the traditional banking hall before the electronic revolution.

Character-Defining Elements

- location on a main city street at a busy intersection
- corner location
- classical proportion

- classical elements including base, aluminum 'colonnade' of curtain wall glazing, slender cornice, and recessed central entrance on short elevation
- materials of construction including Haddington Island Stone-faced walls and joint pattern, Peribonka (jet black) granite plinth, Verdi Oniciate (green flecked black) marble recessed entrance canopy
- patent (curtain) aluminum glazing comprising wide projecting mullions and slender transoms holding plain glazing, opening lights, and moulded aluminum panels
- open banking hall on the interior



1715 Government Street
Victoria, BC
V8W 1Z4
250.386.5503

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
No.1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC
V8W 1P6

November 26, 2013

1501, 1509, 1517 Douglas, 750 Pandora

Re: CALUC Meeting-1515 Douglas Street

Dear Mayor Fortin and Council,

The DRA LUC has reviewed the drawings and hosted a CALUC meeting on October 28th, 2013 for the above-mentioned application. Forty-nine people registered their attendance at the door.

Based on the information presented by the applicant the purpose of the rezoning is to create two buildings with ground floor commercial space fronting Douglas, Cormorant and Pandora Streets. The ground floor commercial is intended to house locally owned and operated retail and hospitality businesses that will contribute vibrancy to the street level during the day and into the evenings. The two buildings would share an underground parking structure. The project would be phased with the first building fronting Douglas Street of 112,000 square feet and the second mid block of 175,000 square feet. The entire parking structure of 225 parking stalls would be constructed as part of phase 1. Cormorant may be converted to 2 way at the City's request depending on the results of a traffic study yet to be completed. Both phases are planned to LEED Gold or Platinum if possible. Street frontages would contain rain garden storm water treatment and the building in phase 1 would have a green roof treatment. Phase 2 would be constructed a few years after phase 1 depending on market conditions. The site will be provided with 24-hour onsite security to enhance public safety.

Comments and concerns raised at the CALUC meeting by the public are as follows;

- When asked about construction timing the applicant said phase 1 would take about 24 to 26 months with phase 2 about 22 to 24 months
- When asked about the loss of public parking on the existing lot the applicant response was that there would be parking available to the public in the new parking structure as they didn't expect the office workers would utilize all parking.
- An attendee asked whether the conversion of Cormorant to 2 way would result in loss of parking. The applicant responded that it was expected to loose parking if Cormorant was

converted to 2 way but there will be a comprehensive traffic study conducted to confirm that any proposed changes to traffic patterns were necessary.

- An attendee asked if phase 2 would be lower in height if the market dictated. The applicant responded that the proposed building was under the maximum height and FSR allowable for the site already so it would not be any smaller.
- One attendee commended the proposed LEED Gold standard and asked if there was any chance for a residential component. The applicant responded that there were many quality residential projects nearby and that they felt there was a market need for class A office space so there is no residential component planned.
- The question was asked what effect this project would have on property values in the area. The applicant felt that this project had the opportunity to revitalize the entire area. The reaction locally to their Atrium project was very positive and they expect this to be similar.
- A question was asked about night time security throughout the site as it is currently a problem area. The applicant stated that 24 hour security will be provided for outdoor areas to provide safety to all the outdoor areas of the site. This has been their policy at the Atrium Building and has had positive results for that and surrounding areas.

No attendees of the CALUC meeting voiced opposition to the proposal. The DRA LUC has also received letters from Firm Management Corporation, the Managers of 770 Cormorant and the DVBA, both strongly supporting the proposal as presented.

The DRA supports this proposal as it appears to be of very high quality, will bring vitality to the City Hall precinct and provide a "bridge" to the northern end of Downtown.

Sincerely,

Ian Sutherland
Chair Land Use Committee
Downtown Residents Association

cc Planning and Development Department

Ian Sutherland

From: Rod Fimrite [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 4:05 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Jawl Developments proposed project for the property comprised of 3 lots at 1501 and 1509 Douglas Street and 750 Pandora.

October 28, 2013

Hi Mr. Sutherland

I am unable to attend the community meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. this evening at 1321 Blanchard Street, but would like to comment on the proposed development.

Our company are managers of both the strata and commercial property at 770 Cormorant Street, which is basically across Cormorant Street from the proposed development, and we also manage several other downtown Victoria properties, both commercial and residential.

We very strongly support approval of the proposed development, as we feel that it will provide a high-quality, attractive office/retail component that will enhance that area of the city by providing a people-friendly and aesthetically pleasing ground floor space combined with quality office space on the upper floors. Such a development will be complementary to the nearby high-end residential developments that have recently taken place in the north-central downtown area, will increase tax revenue for the City, and increase property values in the area.

It is well known that Jawl Developments has an exemplary track record in developing quality projects in Victoria and Saanich, and that the company and the Jawl family are excellent corporate and individual citizens.

Please indicate our support for the project in the strongest possible terms.

Thank you.

R.A. Fimrite, Principal
FIRM MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
200 - 1931 Mt. Newton X Road
Saanichton, BC V8M 2A9
Office: 250-544-2300
[REDACTED]

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11/28/2013



November 25, 2013

Mr. Ian Sutherland,
Downtown Residents Association,
1713 Government Street,
Victoria, B.C.
V8W 1P7

Dear Ian,

Re: Proposed Jawl Development, north-east corner of Douglas & Pandora

I am writing on behalf of the DVBA to express very enthusiastic support for the proposed redevelopment by Jawl Properties of the north-east corner of Douglas and Pandora. The two-phase, 287,000 square foot commercial development will be that "vote of confidence" in the downtown that all need to see. It will reinforce the fact that the downtown continues to be the economic centre of our region and will provide a key counter-balance to the residential investment being made downtown. Given the careful manner in which the Jawls analyze the market place and choose their tenants, it will be another showcase of success.

The concept drawings presented to a number of our Board members earlier in the month were very well received and we are particularly appreciative of the careful two-phased timing of the project – to ensure they do not create an imbalance in the commercial space market – and the overall sustainability of the site plan.

If there is anything that we can do to assist with this project moving forward, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth Kelly
General Manager