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**BOARD OF VARIANCE**

City of Burnaby Planning and Building Department  
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**RE: 7868 GOVERNMENT ROAD |** Board of Variance Application

Dear Members of the Board of Variance,

Please find our application for Board of Variance for the house at 7868 Government Road. Thank you for the opportunity to describe the project, and explain how the design resolution is informed by carefully addressing the goals of a high quality home that respectfully adds to the character of the neighborhood.

The main design directive is a home that is reflective of the quality of the neighborhood, sited and massed carefully to complement the neighboring houses, and formed and landscaped in a manner that provides maximum privacy to and from adjacent properties.

In order to achieve these goals, the house is planned in a U-shape, arranged around an internalized patio and soft landscape to the south, to which the majority of the glazing faces. The windows on the north, east and west sides of the house are carefully placed to maintain privacy while also contributing to the rich character of the building elevations. The house is set back from the east property line, where most of the houses abut, in order to create a significant buffer.

The house is designed vastly as one-storey, in order to reduce the visual impact from street and neighbors. The main central area of the home is one storey but is double-height, similar in size and arrangement to the neighbouring houses. There is a small mezzanine of 350 square feet in this double-height space; all other floor area is on the main floor or in the basement. Ridgelines of homes directly to the east and west are higher than the proposed house.

Extensive landscaping around the perimeter of the site, including a fence covered by a double row of hedging, offers a natural feel for most of the property, provides visual and acoustic buffer, and conveys an enhanced level of security to deter people from loitering in the area.

As a background, the proposed residence is situated on a lot of approximately 100,000 square feet. As per R1a zoning, the permitted size of building is over 60,000 square feet, with a footprint of over 40,000 square feet. The proposed house has a total gross floor area of approximately 26,000 square feet and footprint of approximately 11,000 square feet.

The house and the landscape have been designed to meet the above objectives, and in turn include the following variances:

### Height of house

As per R1a Zoning: 2 1/2 storeys and 7.4 m (24.3 ft.) for a building with a flat roof

Proposed: 1 Storey and 30.75 ft. with a flat roof as per City's definitions

Variance: 6.45 ft. in height, as measured from the average rear grade to top of roof.

Rationale: As described above, the design intent for the massing of the house is to maintain a generally low typical building height, with a one storey house that complements the neighborhood. The east and west wings of the house are very low at typically approx. 13 feet high from floor to top of flat roofs.

The location of Variance is at the center of the house, where the volume is increased to create a visual break to the massing. The roof is considered flat as per City's definitions, however the roof of the high volume slopes at approximately 2:12, opening up toward the south with substantial glazing and clerestorey below to allow light into the building, and provide views to the rear yard of the site. This volume reads as a two-storey house that is complementary to the height and size of houses on adjacent lots as illustrated in the elevation drawings supplied with the rezoning application. From the street, the house reads as 24-foot high as measured from the average front grade.

Additionally due to the sloping grades the house is set down low, approx. 5.5 feet below the street elevation. The roof heights of adjacent houses are higher and more dominant than the roof lines of the proposed home.

If measured from proposed finish grade rather than existing, the building is approximately 29.75 feet above grade. If measured from the main floor, where most of grade meets the building, the roof is 24 feet above grade, and therefore from most views is visually within the maximum permitted under zoning. The finished grades at the lower side of the house will also be adjusted, whereby the finished roof height is 26 feet and also within the allowable by zoning.

### Building depth

As per R1a Zoning: the lesser of 50% lot depth (=216.625 ft.) or 60 ft

Proposed: 113 ft.

Variance: 53 ft.

Rationale: as part of the approach to reduce the high volume and to complement the streetscape, the house is arranged with two flanking wings that are set down low compared to the central volume of the house.

The house is situated with the driveway on the east side and generally located toward the west side of the site to create a large separation from the adjacent houses to the east. The massing and materiality of the sides of the house are articulated to provide visual interest and to reduce a long wall effect.

The current plan is a product of working with the City and responding to comments of previous design iterations. Previous submissions show a greater overall depth and a house closer to more neighbors. We are happy that we had the opportunity to locate and shape the house more sensitively to the surrounding neighborhood.

## Fence Height

As per Zoning Bylaw: 2.95 ft. in required front yard; 5.91 ft. elsewhere

Proposed: 8 ft. at the north and south of site; 6 ft. at sides

Rationale: In order to provide an appropriate level of security and privacy for the family, a solid fence is proposed surrounding the property. There are a few newer precedents that show high privacy fences at the front of the site, such as a newer house 3 doors to the west.

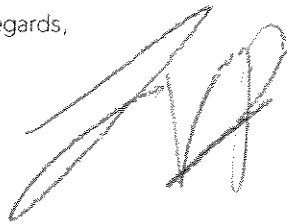
The nature of the fence at the front of the site along Government Road, and at the rear along Kentwood Street, will be of robust quality and design appropriate for the neighborhood, comprised mainly of brick that complements the material palette of the home. There will also typically be hedging along the fencing, such that in most locations the fence will not be noticeable; the fence acts primarily as an increased security provision behind the hedging.

The Development and Rezoning departments at the City of Burnaby are typically concerned that there may be increased noise from a house with a large patio, and have requested solid walls to reduce sound transfer to adjacent properties. We believe noise issues will not be the case with this project, as the family does not intend to have many unusually large outdoor gatherings, and as the patio is surrounded on three sides by the house. Nevertheless we have followed the City's recommendations, and have coordinated with the City that the walls are to be 6 feet high, along the entire length of the property adjacent neighbors. As the fencing extends into the front yards at north and south of the lot, this is part of the requested variance.

The fencing along the east side of the site will typically be 5 feet away from the property line in order for the landscaping to be easily maintained on both sides of the fence, and also to avoid installing a fence directly against the neighbors' yards.

Thank you for reviewing our submission. We appreciate the opportunity to describe the challenges afforded to the project and the design solutions that have been created to address the issues while delivering a high quality home that the owner will be proud to integrate into the neighborhood. We look forward to receiving your response and are eager to continue the process to building permit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me to discuss anything.

Best Regards,



**Jordan van Dijk**

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