



PRIMEX INVESTMENTS LTD.
#200 – 1785 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver BC, Canada
V6J 1M2

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

Dear Mayor & Council

Re: [REVISED PROPOSAL \(November 21, 2023\):](#)

[OCP Amendment, Rezoning, Development Permit and Heritage Alteration Permit Application for:](#)

- 1342 Pandora Avenue (a heritage-designated property)
- 1344 / 1352 Pandora Avenue
- 1354 Pandora Avenue
- 1356 Pandora Avenue (a city-owned parcel of land)
- 1358 / 1360 Pandora Avenue

Figure 1: Location / Property Plan



The sites, collectively, contained 22 old rental units, of which 20 are currently occupied.



The Revised Proposal

Five parcels (including a city-owned parcel of land) are involved in this application that make up the proposed development parcel. The properties are located on the northeast corner of Fernwood Road and Pandora Avenue at the southernmost gateway to the Fernwood Community, roughly equidistant between the Fernwood and Stadacona Urban Villages.

After numerous meetings with the community, direct neighbours, and the City of Victoria (January 2023), we are pleased to submit this revised proposal for:

- A 12-unit Strata Development consisting of 10 Townhouses and a restored Heritage House (to be converted to a duplex); and
- A 73-unit purpose-built market rental building consisting of studio, 1BR, 2BR, and 3BR units.

Our development concept has been developed based on some fundamental guiding principles:

- Heritage Restoration/repair/relocation of 1342 Pandora Avenue;
- 73 market rental units secured via a housing agreement;
- Providing “Missing Middle” Family 2 and 3 BR TH units in proximity to community services, retail, and transit;
- The preservation/protection of an existing 100’ healthy sequoia tree as a centrepiece to both the development and the outdoor amenity space and
- Responsible and transparent tenant communication and implementing the City of Victoria’s Tenant Assistance Policy.



We have developed our concept to be consistent with various City of Victoria policies, including:

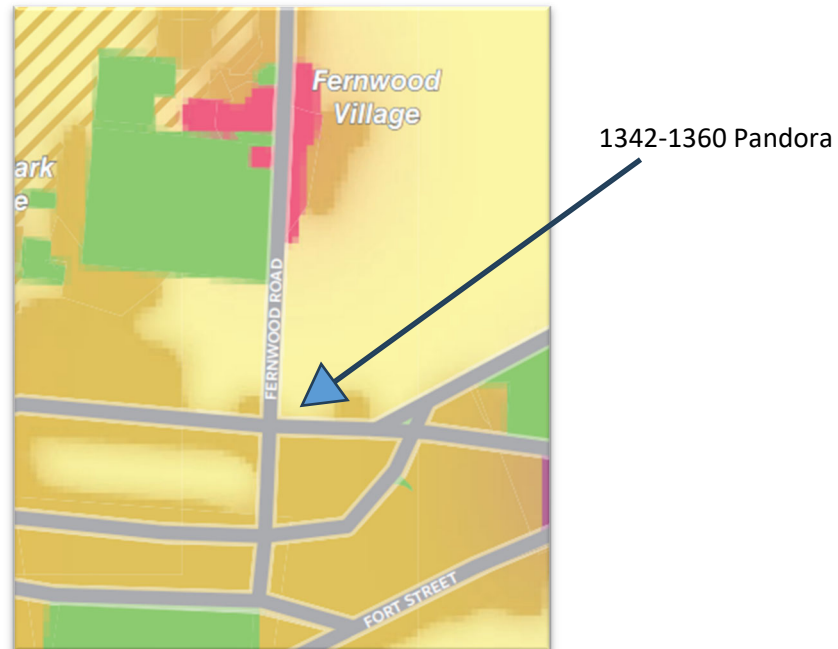
Key Policy / Document	Relevant Policies / Guiding Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Victoria Housing Strategy – 2016-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- A focus on renters- Increasing housing supply and housing choice- Providing Missing Middle Options for families- Providing for family housing (2 and 3 BR Units)-
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Victoria’s Housing Future	Identifies the need for more housing across a range of options in Victoria.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan (2022);	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Encourage diverse housing in size, tenure, and form to support diverse populations.- Encourage housing that is designed to be livable and complement its surroundings.- Enable housing forms and scales that can support diverse tenures.- 6.15: Space for a diverse mix of housing- 6:17: Flexibility for Diverse Types and Tenures- 6:18: Heritage Conservation and Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City of Victoria Missing Middle Design Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 6.1: Site, orient and design corner townhouses with facades and unit entries facing and accessed from both fronting streets- 9: Heritage Conserving Infill design criteria

To achieve this unique and special development, our application seeks:

- To amend the Official Community Plan from Traditional Residential to Urban Residential to permit the two developments with an aggregate FSR of 1.7.
 - West Side Townhouses: 1.1 FAR
 - East Side Apartments: 2.4 FAR



Figure 2: OCP Map



- To subdivide the subject properties to create two new development parcels;
- Rezone the future properties to site-specific CD Bylaws to permit the developments
 - 12 strata townhouse project and
 - 73 Unit purpose-built rental building
- Separate Development Permits (DP) for each development;
- A Heritage Alteration Permit (HAP) to relocate and restore the heritage house on-site and
- A purchase and sale agreement with the City of Victoria for 1356 Pandora Street, assuming the project received regulatory approval.

New Proposal

The project has been reworked based on extensive neighbourhood consultation and in response to the City of Victoria's comments.

Key changes include:

The Apartments:

- Reducing the overall massing of the apartment buildings to appear less bulky along the Pandora frontage;



- Changing the plan from 2 buildings to a single L-shaped building with the massing focused on Pandora tapering down to northern neighbours
- Increasing rear yard setbacks to neighbouring homes
- Reduced shadow impacts on neighbouring properties
- Improving access to outdoor amenities for future tenants and residents
- Reduced appearance of massing through a flat roof and using architecture to be more human scale along the Pandora frontage.

The Townhouses / Heritage Restoration

- Refined architecture to be reflective of heritage character (roof pitch, design, materials);
- Development of a duplex renovation to the heritage house to retain its character and function as a residential feature and
- Use of porous materials throughout to improve stormwater management

The design team has worked collaboratively to refine the design through enhanced landscaping, clean architecture and compact design while retaining the needed legal separations between the Townhouse site and the rental apartments. The future outdoor amenity space is intended to be shared by future residents regardless of strata or rental tenure and is more centrally located within the heart of the site.

The Townhouses at Sequoia

1342 Pandora and 1344 Pandora will be rezoned and subdivided to create a small Strata Townhouse Development that addresses Victoria’s ‘Missing Middle’ requirements for more townhouses in the Urban Area for families. The development proposed to build 12 ground-oriented family townhouse units, including:

Table 1: Unit Mix

Unit Type	
2 Bedroom Townhouses	4
3 Bedroom Townhouses	6
3 Bedroom Duplex Units (Heritage House)	2
Total Units	12

To ensure that the designated Heritage House (the Maclaughlin Residence) is prominently featured, we propose to relocate the heritage house approximately 4 metres south while keeping its prominent corner location. By restoring the home and installing new and maintained landscaping, we hope to share this historic asset with the community.

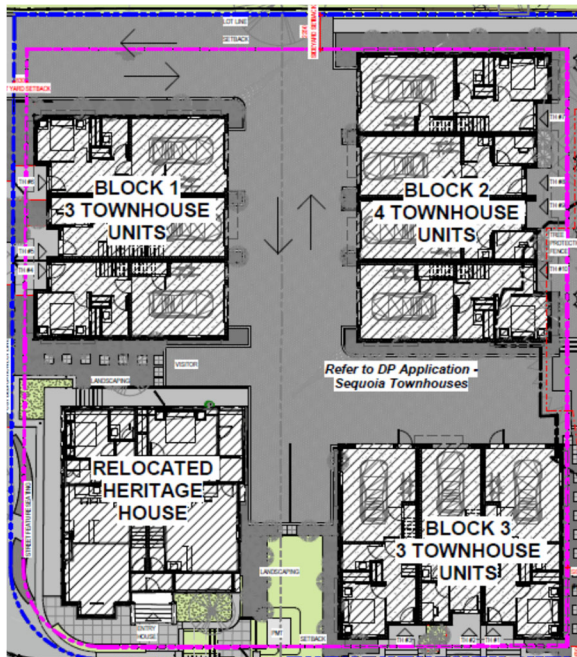
Extensive structural upgrades will be required to ensure the home at 1342 Pandora will meet BCBC requirements; however, detailed reviews from structural engineers (Glotman Simpson) demonstrate that this is a feasible approach to protecting the building.



With guidance from DLA Heritage Consultants, original materials and features will be restored, replaced or rebuilt as per the Conservation Plan. The home, originally built in 1883, features on some of Victoria's earliest planning and insurance maps, and we look forward to ensuring its history is not lost.

City engineering requirements for road widening along Fernwood necessitate the removal of the existing stone wall (which is in disrepair) with new and enhanced landscaping. Part of this relocation would include the stone wall reconstruction, considering the City's desire to widen Fernwood Avenue, along with a proposed area of pedestrian respite at the corner of Fernwood and Pandora. This sitting area would be close to the BC Transit bus stop and feature information on the heritage and history of 1342 Pandora.

Figure 3: Proposed Townhouse Development Concept



The Maclaughlin Residence will be paired with new townhouses; they are designed to reflect the original home's heritage architectural characteristics while still being unique. Features such as roof peaks, bay windows and the use of materials and colours will ensure the heritage home stands out as the site's key feature.

The new townhouses will be modern, sustainable, energy-efficient and thoughtfully designed to ensure families can live and work comfortably in their community.



Figure 4: Conceptual Renderings of Townhouse Development



The Apartments at Sequoia

1352, 1354, 1356, 1358 and 1360 Pandora Avenue are proposed to be rezoned and subdivided (consolidated) to permit the development of a 73-unit purpose-built market rental apartment complex above a single level of underground parking.

Table 2: Rental Unit Mix / Allocation

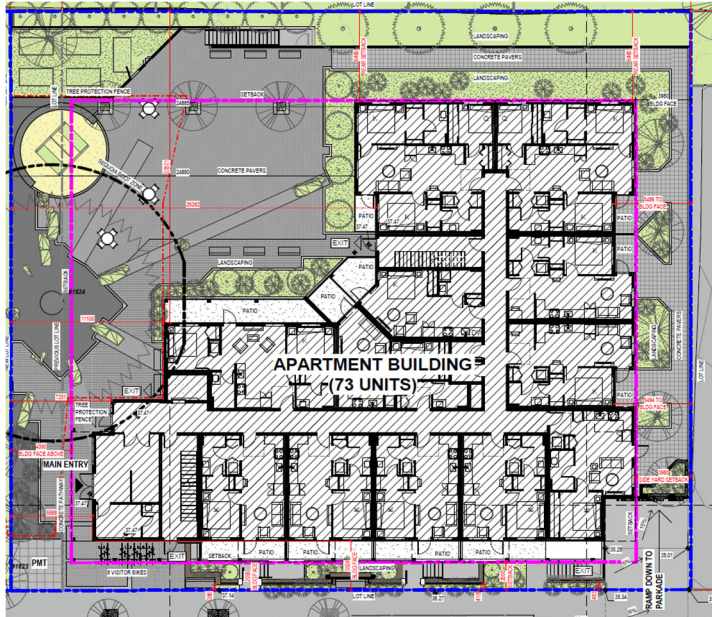
Unit Type	
Studios	12
1 Bedroom	18
1 Bedroom + Den	25
2 Bedroom	8
3 BR Townhouses	8
Total Units	73

As part of our proposal and in recognition of the lack of secure family rentals in Victoria, the working design incorporates numerous family units (8 * 3 Bedroom units and 8 * 2 Bedroom/2 Bath Units. This is a substantial increase in family units on the site.

Furthermore, the design works with the site grades to minimize excavation around the Sequoia tree. It ensures the area around the tree is improved from its current situation, encased within broken asphalt. The design emphasizes the buildings adjacent to the arterial on Pandora and tapers down to the neighbours to the rear (north) of the site.

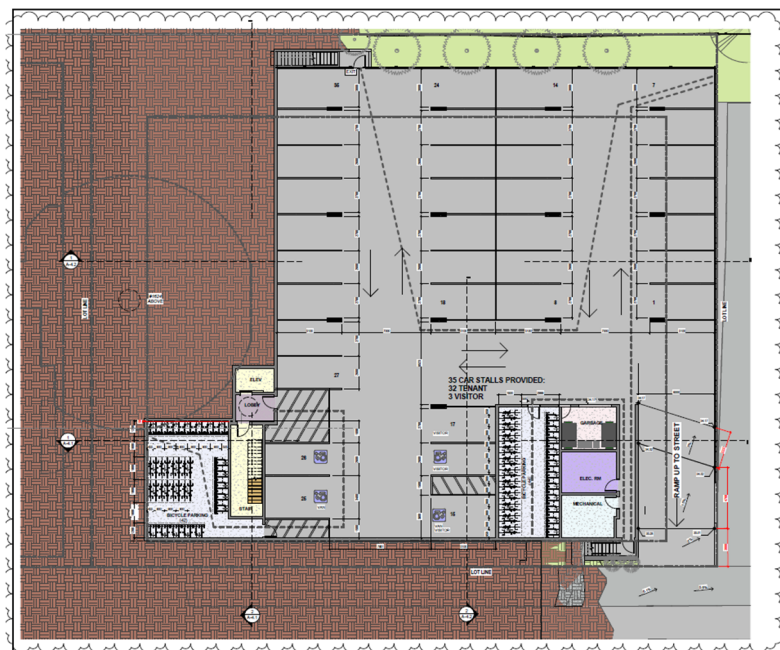


Figure 5: Rental Apartment Development Concept



Underground parking access will be via a driveway from Pandora Avenue, and we anticipate working closely with the City engineering department to design the parking entry to ensure the safety of cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles along Pandora.

Figure 6: Proposed Underground Parking Design





As part of the proposal, we seek to reduce the required parking spaces from 70 to 35 (32 residents and three visitor spots). This accounts for the lower demand for parking in rental projects, immediate proximity to transit, and significant bike infrastructure.

Moreover, we intend to provide significant bike infrastructure (above bylaw requirements), including long-term bike parking/storage, provisions for e-bike charging, and dedicated cargo bike spaces.

Figure 7: Conceptual Renderings (northwest view from Pandora)



This project will provide social, environmental, and economic benefits to the City and the Fernwood neighbourhood, including:

- A net increase of secured rental housing units in a walkable, bikeable and transit-oriented served location;
- A range of different unit types that allow for a diversity of residents and
- Increased population located within walking distance of amenities and services.

Landscape Plan and Tree Preservation

The landscape plan primarily focuses on preserving a large and healthy Sequoia Tree in the middle of the site. Approximately 100 feet tall, this tree becomes the focal point of the two developments, with complementary outdoor amenities shared between the Strata Townhouses and the rental apartments.



Figure 10: Conceptual Landscape Plan (Apartments)



Active outdoor spaces, including a children's play area, seating areas, picnic tables, and passive spaces, are spread throughout the site and linked to the central mews area. A combination of soft and hard landscaping creates a clear separation of the private (for residents) and public spaces (sidewalks and corner plaza).

At the corner of Fernwood and Pandora, we propose developing a 'southern gateway' into the Fernwood neighbourhood. This area will include unique seating and an opportunity for signage boards and information related to the Heritage House at 1342 Pandora.

Furthermore, working with the City and neighbours' feedback, a new covered transit stop will be installed along Fernwood Avenue. Combined with an improved sidewalk, this will make pedestrian movements along Fernwood safer and more comfortable.



Heritage Conservation of the MacLaughlin Residence (1342 Pandora)

We are seeking the relocation of 1342 Pandora (a designated heritage house) south on the property by approximately 4 metres / 15 feet. Built in 1883, this home represents a significant piece of Victoria's architectural history as a "highly intact example of vernacular Queen Anne architecture." The building, however, is in disrepair due to the creation of substandard rental units on the interior. Glotman Simpson Structural Engineers have provided structural plans showing how the building can be retrofitted internally to support the proposed duplex conversion,



Moving the heritage home creates a new and solid foundation upon which the building can be restored and repaired while ensuring it remains perched (as described in the heritage reports) above the corner of Fernwood and Pandora. This has the additional benefit of meeting the City of Victoria's goals for a safer pedestrian experience and a new accessible bus stop along Fernwood.

DLA Heritage Consultants have completed both a Heritage Conservation Plan and Heritage analysis of the subject site, outlining this heritage-designated property's requirements, history, and value.

Primex Investments has extensive experience integrating heritage into new developments (727 Yates, Parkway and the Scott Building). We look forward to collaborating with the City to preserve and recognize this historic building, including installing a plaque clearly illustrating the story of 1342 Pandora.

Public Engagement

Primex Investments has met with the community several times over the last 24 months. This included four presentations to the Community Advisory Land Use Committee (CALUC) – including several informal meetings and one formal 'city' mandated meeting in November 2022.

Our team continues to communicate our goals, processes, timelines, etc, with the neighbourhood, and we have made numerous changes to our development concept due to these discussions. For example,



at inception, our original intent was to develop a large 120-unit – 6-storey - rental building covering most of the site that would have removed all trees.

The version of the plan submitted today represents the middle ground between financial realities, sound design, and community-based plans changes. As with the original submission, our goal is to create a significant development that fits into the unique character of Fernwood through:

1. Preserving a healthy sequoia tree;
2. The Creation of a significant number of family units (both rental and strata);
3. Reduced floor-to-floor heights and a redesign of buildings adjacent to neighbours to reduce shadows and overlook;
4. Creating a corner plaza as a gateway feature to Fernwood, along with an associated Heritage board celebrating the history of 1342 Pandora Avenue;
5. The installation of a covered bus stop with a bench, as requested by the neighbours, and
6. A goal is to reuse the stone materials on site wherever possible as part of the future landscaping.

Through the City process, we will continue to meet with the community via the CALUC and others as necessary and when possible.

Tenant Assistance Plans

There are 22 existing rental units, of which 20 are currently occupied; we have developed a robust approach to tenant assistance that has already commenced. Since our application, two units have been vacated and have not been re-rented due to their poor condition. The affected tenants have been compensated in keeping with the City's policies.

Using the City of Victoria's Tenant Assistance Policy (TAP) and our recently completed Village Green TAP as a guide, we have begun the process of communicating with the current tenants about our proposed plans and shared information on the potential compensation that the tenants are eligible to receive upon approval of the project.

To reduce the financial burden caused by relocation, eligible residents will be compensated based on their length of tenancy AND a flat rate for moving expenses based on their suite size.



Table 3: Victoria Tenancy Compensation Requirements

Length of Tenancy	Compensation Amount
1-4 Years	Equal to 3 Months of Rent
5-9 Years	Equal to 4 Months of Rent
10-19 Years	Equal to 5 Months of Rent
20+ Years	Equal to 6 Months of Rent
*Rental compensation will be based on the greater value - the residents' current rent or the CMHC average rent for the unit type.	

Table 4: City of Victoria Moving Expenses by Unit Type

Suite Type	Moving Expenses (\$)
Bachelor & 1 Bedroom	\$500
2 Bedroom	\$750
3 Bedroom	\$1,000

Upon completion, residents will be given the first right of refusal to rent in the new building. Returning residents will be offered a special rate of 20% below market rent at the time of lease-up for their new suite for a suitable unit. If a resident's current rent is higher than the proposed 20% below market rent, the right of first refusal will be offered at the resident's current rental rate.

Primex Investments has retained Pacific Cove Property Management to provide tenant relocation services and has a dedicated Relocation Manager who works collaboratively with residents to facilitate open communications and implement a personalized tenant assistance plan.



Summary:

This project, referred to internally as “the Townhouses” and “Apartments” at Sequoia, represents a real effort to react and respond to the various housing issues in Victoria. This project aims to:

1. Provide more housing – more than 3* the amount of secured rental housing, including family options.
2. Restore a heritage asset for the benefit of all Victoria residents;
3. Develop a project with a high standard of architectural and sustainable design that is based on Step Code 3 or better;
4. Utilize land efficiently with an aggregate density of 1.7 FAR
5. Orient development to both Fernwood and Pandora with street fronting/facing units, thereby ensuring a pleasing and safe streetscape and pedestrian realm
6. Provide opportunities for car-light living options.
7. A robust plan to work with existing tenants to meet and exceed the City’s minimum required tenant assistance supports.

We look forward to working with the City on this unique development that will bring much-needed housing options to Victoria while preserving an essential piece of Victoria’s history.

Yours truly

Greg Mitchell, M.PL., MCIP, RPP
Senior Planner and Senior Development Manager
Primex Investments Ltd.