



October 3, 2025

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

Re: Pemberton Woods Campus Renewal – Updated Rezoning Application Submission (#REZ00876)

Dear Mayor Alto and City of Victoria Council,

Glenlyon Norfolk School (GNS) is pleased to submit its updated rezoning application for the Pemberton Woods Campus Renewal. This comprehensive renewal plan, developed through extensive community engagement and aligned with the City of Victoria's future vision policy, aims to modernize our educational infrastructure while strengthening our commitment to the broader community. Our approach balances the evolving needs of education with thoughtful urban design, ensuring a vibrant, sustainable and inclusive campus for generations to come.

For more than 100 years, GNS has been a part of Victoria's educational fabric, dedicated to developing thoughtful citizens with a strong social conscience. GNS is more than just an educational institution. As an active community partner, students and faculty support local initiatives, environmental stewardship and service-learning projects that directly benefit Victoria and its neighbouring communities. In 2024, students contributed over 8,500 service hours, supporting more than 60 different community organizations, reinforcing our belief in the power of making a positive difference.

Vision-Driven Engagement & Community Design

From the start of this renewal process, GNS has prioritized meaningful engagement with all stakeholders to ensure that the Pemberton Woods Campus Renewal reflects both school needs and broader community aspirations. This collaborative process has been guided by a clear vision:

t: 250.370.6800
www.mygns.ca

Junior School
1701 Beach Drive
Victoria, BC, Canada
V8R 6H9
f: 250.370.6853

Middle and Senior Schools
781 Richmond Avenue
Victoria, BC, Canada
V8S 3Z2
f: 250.370.6811



Do your best through truth and courage

To renew the GNS Pemberton Woods Campus with the necessary resources and infrastructure to create a thriving, vibrant learning environment where a mix of people, culture, and nature come together to create a safe, healthy, and sustainable community.

Building on this vision, GNS launched a comprehensive engagement program beginning in June 2023. This included 10 public events and workshops, structured discussions with both the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association and the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association, and extensive input from faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni and local residents. The co-design process was structured to be open and transparent, incorporating City staff feedback while addressing key considerations such as traffic, parking, site circulation, and neighbourhood character.

The outcome of this process was significant: more than 200 unique comments were received and carefully considered. Initial site concepts were shared through the process, tested with the community, and refined through multiple iterations, ultimately resulting in a single, final design—the plan that forms the basis of this application.

The final campus design reflects five key design responses that emerged from this engagement:

1. **Create a Heart Space** – Centralizing learning and gathering around a courtyard that fosters a welcoming campus identity and strengthens neighbourhood connections.
2. **Integrate with Mobility Networks** – Enhancing safe pedestrian and cycling connections and aligning with the City's greenway system.
3. **Enhance Vehicular Circulation** – Relocating primary access to Richmond Avenue and reorganizing circulation to improve school and neighbourhood conflicts and improve efficiency.
4. **Honour Site Boundaries** – Maintaining generous setbacks and landscaped buffers, retaining priority trees, and respecting neighbourhood scale.
5. **Distinguish Public and Private Uses** – Providing semi-public facilities such as playing fields, enhanced indoor facilities and meeting areas for community use while ensuring safe learning spaces for students.

Together with the community, this vision, engagement process, and design have created a plan that is responsive to the evolving needs of education. The outcome is a renewal that seeks to balance the priorities of the school, the aspirations of the community, and the broader objectives of the City of Victoria.

Policy Alignment, Engagement Outcomes, and the Need for a Site-Specific Zone

Victoria 2050 and the new Official Community Plan set out a vision for a climate-forward, inclusive, and resilient city. The Pemberton Woods Campus Renewal aligns with this vision by

delivering modern educational facilities, new rental housing, enhanced pedestrian and cycling connections, sustainable landscaping and stormwater systems, and facilities that can also serve the community, such as playing fields and a gymnasium. In doing so, the renewal supports the OCP's emphasis on strong community infrastructure, housing diversity, and connected green neighbourhoods.

The renewal process began in 2022 with a comprehensive assessment of the school's long-term needs. Since June 2023, the plan has been shaped through a year of engagement with students, families, staff, alumni, neighbours, the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association, and the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association. That engagement translated directly into design decisions, including consolidating buildings toward the centre of the site along Richmond, preserving landscaped setbacks, and providing rental housing in townhouse form along Maddison Street.

To carry this shared vision forward with clarity and predictability, the application seeks to establish a site-specific Comprehensive Development (CD) Zone and accompanying design guidelines. The City's new zoning tools provide valuable direction for housing and neighbourhood design, but a CD Zone is the most appropriate mechanism for an institutional campus that must combine large-format learning and athletic spaces, landscaped buffers, and phased renewal while the school remains in operation. A CD Zone provides long-term certainty, formalizes the outcomes of neighbourhood engagement, and ensures that renewal can adapt as community-serving needs evolve.

In this way, the application is both aligned with the City's new policy direction and reflective of the specific needs of the school and its neighbours. It advances the goals of Victoria 2050, addresses the long-term educational facilities of GNS, and delivers design outcomes shaped through extensive community consultation.

Parking Strategy and Community Considerations

Parking has been a significant topic throughout the engagement process. Neighbours were clear that GNS should comply fully with the City's Schedule C requirements, and this application reflects that outcome. The plan provides 181 stalls (162 for school use, 19 for rental housing) in full compliance with Schedule C, without seeking any variances or reductions.

Recognizing the long-term nature of the renewal, the application requests that parking requirements be set by the City's standards in effect at the time of each Development Permit application. This ensures that parking supply will continue to adapt as City transportation policies evolve, while maintaining certainty that the school will remain compliant throughout the multi-decade renewal.

In response to community feedback during engagement, the design incorporates 80 underground stalls, which is a significant commitment that exceeds provincial standards for schools and goes beyond what any Victoria high school currently provides. For further context, no high school currently or under construction in the region includes an underground parkade. During the subsequent Technical Review process, staff encouraged exploring additional underground parking. While we respect this direction, engineering analysis confirmed that the 80 underground stalls already included represent the practical limit. Expanding beyond this level would conflict with athletic facilities, such as the gymnasium and playing fields, and would introduce significant costs.

This parking strategy reflects a carefully balanced approach: it honours neighbourhood priorities, maintains full compliance with City policy, incorporates underground parking beyond typical school practice, and provides flexibility to adapt as City standards evolve.

Mid-Block Connections

The school recognizes the value of pedestrian connections to community uses and has incorporated improved pathways linking the campus with Pemberton Park and other key access points. During the TRG review, staff suggested exploring an additional north–south mid-block pedestrian connection between Bank Street and Laurentian Place to provide public access through the middle of the campus.

We respectfully submit that the additional access suggested by staff does not align with the historic pattern of the site, the operational needs of a functioning school campus, or community priorities identified through engagement. No such connection has historically existed on this site, and it did not emerge as a request during consultations with residents on either street. Movement in this area has historically been oriented along Richmond Avenue (for buses, cars, and bikes) and Maddison Street (as a planned greenway for pedestrians and cyclists). Introducing a mid-block north–south corridor will compromise student safety and secure campus operations, while duplicating movement patterns already served by the existing transportation network.

While standard design guidelines encouraging permeability work well for residential redevelopment, their application must be adapted for institutional uses with unique operational requirements that prioritize student safety and security. Our design application instead focuses on strengthening campus edges, enhancing established public realm connections, and significantly improving public access through the campus by formalizing pathways via public rights-of-way. The design has been updated to provide an east–west multi-use pathway from Richmond Avenue to Maddison Street, allowing both cyclists and pedestrians to move through

the campus along an established route while maintaining the functional integrity and security of the school environment.

Heritage Considerations and Community Stewardship

Heritage is an important part of our renewal planning. The Norfolk House School for Girls building and the Gymnasium are recognized features of the Pemberton Woods Campus and represent part of Victoria's educational landscape. As the long-term steward of these buildings since their construction, GNS has approached this aspect of renewal with great care.

We recognize that heritage assessment can involve different perspectives and values. To ensure a thorough and professional evaluation, GNS engaged Luxton Heritage Consultants and consulted with alumni, staff and community members with personal connections to the buildings' history. The heritage assessment process examined both the historical significance of the structures and their current condition after decades of use and modification.

The professional assessment found that while the buildings hold historical value, decades of modifications have altered their original heritage character in irreversible ways. Many functional changes have occurred over time, original material has been replaced or altered, and there are large later additions, presenting significant challenges for any meaningful conservation. The assessment team, including those with deep personal ties to the buildings, concluded that the most appropriate approach should focus on documenting, preserving, and celebrating the heritage story in new ways.

Our heritage approach includes:

- Professional documentation of the two buildings and their role in the school's history.
- Careful preservation and reuse of surviving character-defining elements such as significant woodwork and architectural details..
- Interpretative features throughout the renewed campus that will keep our historical traditions alive for future generations.

This approach reflects recognized heritage practice that values both the physical and cultural aspects of heritage. It also acknowledges that an equally meaningful way to honour a building's legacy can be through thoughtful documentation and the preservation of its stories and elements within a renewed environment, one designed to serve the community safely, sustainably and effectively into the future.

Landscape and Environmental Enhancements

The renewal plan incorporates opportunities to enhance the site's environmental contribution where feasible within the constraints of an active campus. Our approach includes native species integration with attention to Garry oak and other Indigenous plants where site conditions and

campus operations allow. A tree retention and replacement strategy has been developed in consultation with City arborists, including medium-sized trees in locations where spacing and soil conditions support healthy growth.

Stormwater management improvements are designed to work toward City rainwater management objectives while accommodating the realities of educational facilities and programming needs. Enhanced streetscape interfaces along campus frontages aim to improve the pedestrian experience while maintaining appropriate campus functionality. Particular attention has been paid to the Maddison Street frontage, where the City envisions a future greenway corridor. Our campus design recognizes this planned greenway by incorporating complementary landscaping and pedestrian-friendly features to support the broader neighbourhood vision for enhanced cycling and walking connections.

The renewal provides opportunities to improve the site's environmental contribution while ensuring that landscape choices support both educational programming and long-term maintenance capacity. Our landscape approach reflects input from both environmental consultants and the school community's experience with what thrives in this location, while also considering how campus improvements can contribute positively to emerging neighbourhood infrastructure like the Maddison Greenway.

A Collaborative Process & Vision for the Future

This application represents more than two years of collaborative planning, beginning with our community engagement process in June 2023 and continuing through detailed work with City staff during the Technical Review process. Our vision extends beyond educational facilities; it is about strengthening neighbourhood connections, supporting sustainable urban design, and ensuring that this renewal contributes positively to the City's growth. All this while respecting the character of the Gonzales community.

We trust this submission, together with this letter, provides Mayor and Council with the information and context needed to evaluate this application. We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to bringing this vision to life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chad Holtum", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chad Holtum
Head of School