

July 10, 2025

**City of Victoria**  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Attention: Mayor and Council

Re: Evergreen Phase 1 (DA\_D) Development Proposal, 2501 Blanshard Street  
Application for Development Permit

On behalf of BC Housing, we're pleased to submit this Development Application for the first building phase at Evergreen Terrace. The following rationale outlines key aspects of the development proposal, its alignment with municipal policy and important contributions to the Hillside Quadra neighbourhood.

**Proposal  
Overview**

Evergreen Terrace is a BC Housing owned and operated site which has provided affordable housing since its build-out in 1970. Located in close proximity to the services and amenities of Quadra Village, the site is an ideal location to intensify residential use and enhance integration with the surrounding urban community. With many of its current buildings nearing the end of their useful life, the property is in progress for comprehensive rezoning, laying the groundwork for long-term phased redevelopment:

*"Future Evergreen is a diverse, accessible, and sustainable mixed-income neighbourhood that provides a range of housing options for people of all ages and background, and is connected to and forms an integral part of the city".*

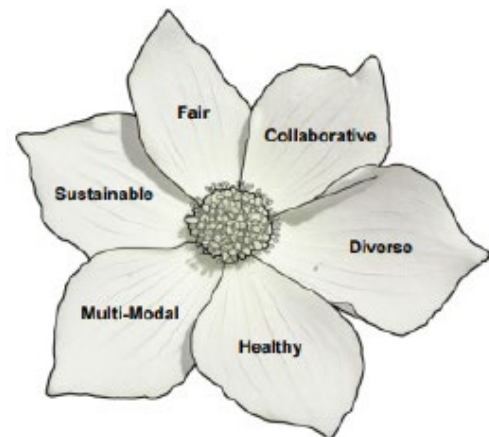
Within the overarching redevelopment plan, the Phase 1 (Development Area D) proposal will be the first step to bring this vision into reality. The Phase 1 site was selected as the optimum site to start the demolition and construction process, minimizing the number of current residents to be relocated off-site. It is a keystone site for the overall project, being across the street from the Quadra Village Community Centre and connecting directly to both of the adjacent future open spaces: the Evergreen Plaza and Evergreen Commons.



*Aerial sketch view highlighting Phase 1 within the overall anticipated redevelopment of Evergreen Terrace.*

The proposal is a six-storey wood-framed building containing 106 homes, totaling approximately 107,478ft<sup>2</sup> over a single level of underground parking. The six-storey building form strikes the optimum balance of housing yield and affordability; the mid-rise massing preserves sunlight access to the adjacent Evergreen Plaza. A wide range of suite sizes is proposed, ranging from one to four bedroom homes, to align with the current homes on site and facilitate like-for-like replacement. As there are 24 homes currently within this portion of the site, Phase 1 represents a net increase of 82 homes within Development Area D; Evergreen residents will be relocated to these new homes, opening up other site areas for the next stage of phased redevelopment.

The Phase 1 building is purpose-built rental housing that will be owned and operated by the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC). Designed to meet BC Housing standards and the Evergreen project principles, the building prioritizes livability, inclusivity, accessibility and sustainability. A range of well-appointed multipurpose spaces will enhance livability and foster community among residents, including: two multipurpose rooms, shared laundry rooms, two rooftop occupied decks and a ground level courtyard. The proposed purpose-built childcare (for approximately 37 children in three age groups) will be located at the ground floor and will serve as an amenity for both building residents and the broader neighbourhood.



**Policy Context** The site is designated Housing Opportunity under the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Hillside Quadra Neighbourhood Plan (HQNP), and is shaped to align with these guiding policies:

- Building height: 6 storeys
- Density: 2.3:1
- Uses: Multiple dwelling and childcare
- Building form & character consistent with applicable guidelines
- Enhanced accessibility in the building and site design
- Well-integrated indoor & outdoor resident amenity spaces
- Architectural design & building systems selected to promote energy efficiency, water conservation and reduction of green house gas emissions
- The project transportation strategy supports multi-modal, affordable living through a balance of vehicle parking, bike amenities and transportation demand management supports

**Need and Demand, Benefits and Amenities**

The Project will make a significant positive contribution to the City through the following:

**Housing Supply and Diversity:** The building will deliver 106 secured affordable rental homes and amenities, calibrated to resident needs:

- Over 70% of suites are family-sized: (39) two bedroom; (28) three bedroom; and (10) four bedroom homes.
- Over 25% of homes incorporate enhanced accessibility: (18) adaptable and (11) fully accessible.
- Access to a range of amenities, including shared roof terraces, indoor lounges, the residential courtyard, private balconies and ground-oriented private patios.

**Licensed Childcare:** Two program spaces for licensed childcare are included at the ground floor of the East building wing. The infant and toddler program is accessed from Dowler Place and is anticipated to accommodate 12 children. The program space for children aged 3-5 years old will accommodate approximately 25 children; this space is accessed from the building courtyard and will overlook the future Evergreen Commons greenspace to the South.

In addition to these priority uses, the Project makes a positive contribution to City objectives for Urban Design, Sustainability and Active Transportation, as detailed in subsequent sections of this rationale.



*Phase 1 Evergreen creates a connected, comfortable and active frontage on Dowler Place, with the main residential entrance, the childcare play area for younger children, thoughtfully integrated landscape architecture and retained mature trees.*

**Neighbourhood  
Impacts,  
Safety and  
Security**

Tenant and community engagement has been at the foundation of the comprehensive planning process for Evergreen. Following BC Housing's tenants first approach, engagement with tenants marked the start of the overall comprehensive planning process. Continuing engagement for the overall plan started in January 2022 and has included a wide range of meetings and events with: the Tenant Advisory Group, Stakeholders including representatives from the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Committee, Burnside Gorge Community Association, North Park Neighbourhood Association, and Quadra Village Days. In January 2024, a meeting was held with residents living within Development Area D, to share information on the Phase 1 development and the associated Tenant Support Plan. Through this engagement approach, community feedback has consistently informed development of the overall plan and Phase 1 Proposal.

The Project will have a positive neighbourhood impact by addressing multiple key objectives:

- Adding needed rental housing including below-market, accessible and family-friendly homes;
- Provision of licensed childcare;
- Delivery of the first phase of enhanced and accessible pedestrian frontages, as part of the overarching neighbourhood plan;
- Enhancement of public realm green space by integrated landscape architecture / urban design and protection of mature trees on the Blanshard and Dowler frontages;
- Improved neighbourhood integration through clearly defined public and semi-public areas at the ground level;



- Positive overlook to and activation of the public realm, by thoughtful placement of entrances, ground-oriented residential patios and childcare play areas; and
- Entrance locations that are easily identifiable from the street and future public spaces, designed for clear sight lines and night-time visibility.



*Sketch view showing the Blanshard Street frontage, including the new pedestrian and multi-modal path, patios for ground-oriented homes, and inset private balconies.*

**Design  
Overview,  
Design and  
Development  
Permit  
Guidelines**

**Site Plan & Massing:** The building takes the shape of an angled ‘U’, forming edges along the street frontages and Evergreen Plaza, and opening up the Courtyard to the South and adjoining Evergreen Commons. The design integrates with the surrounding public realm on all sides, locating entrances, ground-oriented patios and pedestrian accesses around the building perimeter. An open breezeway provides an informal, outdoor connection through the property, linking the courtyard to the future public open spaces. The courtyard is an active, shared space that integrates play space for residents as well as the licensed childcare, resident amenity space and private residential patios.

The massing has been shaped to address the context and ensure frontages have comfortable street wall heights. On Blanshard Street, the generous setback and existing mature trees mitigate the six-storey massing; on Dowler Place the massing is stepped back to form a four-storey street wall that compliments the current neighbourhood scale (and narrower right-of-way). At the upper floors, the massing is stepped to accommodate amenity roof terraces for residents and to improve daylight access into the courtyard.

**Architectural Expression:** The visual language of the building is contemporary, with a palette of light-toned, textured and neutral materials that compliment the surrounding urban landscape. The main cladding elements are the natural brick base and main ‘body’ of textured cementitious panels. With concealed fasteners and subtle joints, the cladding panels create a cohesive, stucco-like field with a human-scaled pattern of punched window openings. Recessed balconies provide visual contrast and dynamism,

having a more saturated 'copper' finish and alternating pattern of solid and transparent guards. On the West façade, the accent colour is brought into exterior solar shades that bring an additional layer of visual interest.

**Guidelines:** At the time of writing, the City of Victoria General Urban Design Guidelines (2022) are applicable to the site. These guidelines are in the process of being updated and a draft dated February 7, 2025 has been considered in the design. The Project addresses the full range of multi-family residential, urban design and livability objectives of the guidelines. Key features include the following:

- Building façades and pedestrian entrances oriented towards the street (Dowler and Blanshard) and the future public open space to the north.
- Building orientation to maximize the number of units that have access to two orientations (corner units) and/or east or west light.
- Generous ground level setbacks that accommodate the retention of existing trees and addition of new trees, residential patios, and childcare play areas. The setbacks are calibrated to each façade to provide sufficient distance from vehicle traffic.
- Ground level units have individual entrances and patios that connect to adjacent sidewalks and pathways, supporting street vitality and connectivity.
- Upper storey step-backs along the length of Dowler Street and at the South and North ends of the building. These step-backs accommodate generous amenity roof terraces and mitigate shadow impacts onto the Courtyard and future open space. The stepped massing creates a transition in scale to the established neighbourhood to the East and the public spaces to the North and South.
- Building separation of 13.26m, providing generous separation between residential units allowing light and air into the courtyard.
- Shared open space in the form of a ground level courtyard as well as three roof terraces, located on the upper levels to provide access to sunlight and views for all residents.
- Private outdoor space for 90% (95 of 106 units) of units in the form of ground level patios or balconies.
- Sun-shading on the west façade to improve energy efficiency of the building and comfort of the residents.
- High quality and durable cladding: Brick at the lower level; fiber cement panels in a coordinated light colour palette.
- Attractive and accessible landscaping incorporating seating, comfortable pathways, resilient and native plantings, adequate soil volumes for trees, canopy cover, and integrated green stormwater features, such as rain gardens.
- Barrier-free access throughout the building's interior and exterior shared spaces, and inclusion of adaptable and accessible residential suites. The plans have incorporated feedback from the project Accessibility Consultant and accessibility review is ongoing.
- Parking located underground with subordinate access; the parkade structure does not project into the setback, leaving space for existing and new tree growth.
- Abundant secure and convenient bicycle parking.

Evergreen Phase 1 is a dynamic multi-family building, shaped to integrate with its context through angled and stepped massing. The architecture expresses the uses within (childcare, lobbies, private homes and shared amenity spaces)

**Transportation** Evergreen Phase 1 strikes a balance between meeting current resident needs, encouraging alternatives to private vehicle use, and overall project viability. At the time of application, it is understood that the City's transportation bylaws are in the process of being updated; the Transportation Report accompanying this application has been based on available information and our team will continue to work collaboratively with City staff to coordinate with relevant policies.

Evergreen is ideally located for resident mobility, with excellent access to transit, the City's AAA cycling network, neighbourhood car share vehicles and walkable amenities. The building includes one level of underground structure that will address resident needs for vehicle and secure bike parking. A reduction from current bylaw requirements for vehicle parking is proposed, offset by a selection of Transportation Demand Management strategies:

- Supply of long-term and short-term bicycle parking that exceeds current bylaw requirements;
- Provision of non-standard (cargo) bicycle parking spaces;
- EV charging provisions for secure bicycle parking;
- Bike maintenance station for residents;
- Mobility scooter parking;
- Transit pass program for residents.

Details on the transportation demand analysis and management strategies are provided in the Watt report dated 2025-06-30.

**Climate-Forward Building Features**

Evergreen Phase 1 is a forward-looking project that aligns with municipal and provincial policies for sustainability. The Project incorporates these measures to improve livability and achieve long-term operational efficiencies. Climate-forward project features include:

- All electric building designed to meet Emissions Level 4 of the Zero Carbon Step Code
- Designed to Step 4 of the BC Energy Step Code, exceeding municipal requirements
- Enhancement of the site's urban ecology through:
  - Landscape-integrated stormwater management
  - Treatment of roof and pavement rainwater runoff in landscaped rain gardens.
  - Inclusion of native plants and pollinator plants to enhance urban biodiversity.
  - Retention of mature trees on the Project frontages
  - Urban forestry optimization through new trees plantings, with generous soil volumes to develop healthy, long-term canopy cover, and the addition of understory plantings to enhance habitat and biodiversity.
- Redevelopment of an urban site that is well served by cycling infrastructure and transit, and in walkable proximity to services and neighbourhood amenities.
- High-performance building envelope of durable materials.
- Passive design elements including strategic placement and proportion of glazing, retention of mature trees and external shading elements on the West façade.
- High performance HVAC systems: energy recovery ventilators and central air source heat pump & hydronic fan coil HVAC (the building is fully air conditioned).
- All rooms have operable windows and all bedrooms are located on exterior walls.
- Water efficient plumbing fixtures.

- Energy efficient lighting and electrical systems, including electric domestic hot water heating.
- Rough-in provisions for future roof-top solar photovoltaics.

**Urban Forestry** The project is committed to protecting and enhancing the urban forest, and will be using the following strategies to meet the City of Victoria Tree Bylaw and lot minimum requirements. The tree design is guided by the City of Victoria Urban Forestry Masterplan:

- Protection of the existing mature trees on the Blanshard Street and Dowler Place frontages.
- Addition of understory plantings to enhance the habitat and biodiversity quality of the urban forest system.
- The building's parkade structure is set back underground to maintain, and preserve soil volumes for existing and proposed trees.
- Raised planters in the courtyard form intensive green roof areas that allow for good soil volumes for healthy small trees over the parking structure.
- Medium to large sized trees are primarily proposed on-grade (not over building structure) where soil volumes can be maximized and understory planting can create habitat and greenways for small wildlife.

**Infrastructure** Integration of the Development Proposal with existing site infrastructure is a complex undertaking that has been considered from the early stages of the Project's planning and design. The engineering and architectural design team has consulted with City of Victoria staff to review coordination of City infrastructure with the proposed services, traffic, storm water management and right-of-way improvements planned in connection with the Project. The design team has initiated coordination with all utility companies with services adjacent to the site to review existing infrastructure and address conflicts with proposed right-of-way improvements. The Development Proposal will employ sustainability objectives that will minimize the servicing impact of this project on City of Victoria systems. Please refer to the included concept site servicing plan for details on the proposed servicing connections.

In conclusion, Future Evergreen is a highly significant opportunity to address key City objectives for sustainable urban housing development. The Phase1 application is the culmination of years of thoughtful planning and consultation by BC Housing and the Consultant team. We understand this application is eligible for the Fast Track for Affordable Housing; aligned with key City of Victoria objectives and guidelines, this application anticipates a delegated Development Permit process. We appreciate the collaborative inputs from City staff during the comprehensive planning and pre-application stages, and look forward to continued engagement with City staff to facilitate this application process.



Sincerely,

**DAU STUDIO**

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Franco D'Ambrosio, Architect AIBC Hon.PIBC FRAIC LEED AP  
Founding Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erica H. Sangster' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Erica H. Sangster, Architect AIBC FRAIC  
Principal