

January 4, 2021

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

**RE: Rezoning and Development Permit Application for 557 Simcoe St**

Dear Mayor Helps and members of City of Victoria Council,

On behalf of 0772613 BC Ltd. and Bluewater Development Ltd. we are pleased to submit for your consideration a development permit application for 557 Simcoe St in James Bay. Bluewater Development Ltd, owned by Mark Imhoff, is a long time James Bay business that has been creating more than 80 beautiful homes in our neighbourhood since November of 2001. Mark is also a local, successful realtor in James Bay, and we all local James Bay residents (20 plus years).

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL AND ZONING**

The proposed development is two separate buildings each with two townhomes and one combined strata for the entire property. Each town house is two storeys with each home having three bedrooms and all units having private parking. This proposal is to move from R2 zoning to site specific zoning which fits within the OCP for James Bay.

Located a block away from James Bay village, our proposal will create home ownership opportunities for living in one of Victoria's most walkable neighbourhoods. These homes are targeting to families needing three bedrooms as there is little supply of this type of housing in new development in James Bay. The townhomes front Simcoe Street alleviating privacy issues for the South Turner and Clarence Street neighbours.

Immediately adjacent to our proposed development are 2 approved but not yet built single-family homes, each with a 2-bedroom basement suite. Beside the development along South Turner is a large heritage rental unit with a dilapidated heritage stable and very limited parking. Along Simcoe Street is a multi level apartment and a seniors' building. Along Clarence St is a 6-townhouse complex and a multi level apartment building.

**PROJECT BENEFITS AND AMENITIES**

Our proposal has made every effort to meet objectives identified in the Official Community Plan, under:

1. Section 6.22: Generally, support new development in areas designated Traditional Residential that seeks densities toward the upper end of the range
2. Section 6.32 Our plan supports the desire to accommodate additional residents by provided increased housing to 4 units from duplex zoning
3. Section 7.8 Our plan gives back 2.44 m or 8 ft of land along the front of Simcoe Street to the city as part of our development permit
4. Section 7 (7.74 and 7.7104) We propose to enhance plantings and a new tree along Simcoe St, and we have provided interior and exterior bike storage to encourage greener transportation. Last, we will include electric vehicle charging in each unit. We believe this also encourages healthier choices
5. Section 7.12 We are seeking to lower parking demands externally by providing 1 parking spot in each large garage plus an additional visitor parking stall. All the parking is accessed through one driveway on Simcoe St.

6. Section 8.43: Encourage high quality architecture, landscape, and urban design to enhance the visual identity and appearance of the City.
7. Section 8.44: Support new infill and building additions that respond to context through sensitive and innovative design.
8. Section 12.4 We seek to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emission by including bike and Ecar facilities and increasing trees and plantings. We are providing each unit a garden box to encourage edible gardens and our interiors will be finished with go green products
9. item 13.9: Our proposal supports the desire for a range of housing types, forms, and tenures across the city and within neighbourhoods to meet the needs of residents at different life stages. There is a real shortage of 3-bedroom new development in James Bay.
10. Section 13.10: Encourage a mix of residents, including households with children, by increasing opportunities for innovative forms of ground-oriented multi-unit residential housing. We are proposing all 3-bedroom units with a rec. room or home office which is a rarity in James Bay.
11. Section 15.10 We propose 3-bedroom units that will encourage families with children to move into James Bay and our existing James Bay schools.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD, NEEDS AND DEMANDS**

Our proposal meets the OCP for Traditional Residential by being 2 storey houses with front or rear yards, variable landscaping with street tree plantings and on-site parking. It provides 3-bedroom homes which James Bay lacks in new development. We meet the following objectives identified in the Official Community Plan specific to the James Bay neighbourhood:

1. Section 21.16.1: Maintain a variety of housing types and tenures for a range of age groups and incomes.
2. Section 21.16.3: Maintain an interesting diversity of land uses, housing types and character areas.
3. Section 21.16.5: Continue to support sensitive infill.

## **IMPACTS**

The development will compliment the existing neighbourhood as it is already an area with so many different types of housing. The buildings are modern in design which helps keep the rooflines low minimizing shadowing concerns and we have been sensitive to privacy issues by suggesting windows that do not intrude on neighbours' homes. The Clarence St townhomes support our design and our choice of fencing. We will use water permeable driveway materials and have on site parking to alleviate parking pressures in the area.

Concerns addressed by residents of South Turner St at informal JBNA meeting October 2020 include:

- Impact on 154 South Turner stained glass window and stable: The stained glass referred to in minutes of the informal meeting is behind 160 South Turner not this development and the heritage stable is within R2 zoning distance from the development. We have not asked for an east side setback variance. The stable is slowly falling over onto 565 Simcoe St and is in need of remediation.
- OCP- Our proposal falls within the OCP and makes use of the large site to address the need for more housing while still maintaining front and back greenspace on the property with additional plantings and 2 new trees. We believe our proposal will be a positive, beautiful, and respectful addition for all our neighbours.
- Demolition Permit- The demolition permit has been received



- **Lead and Asbestos Removal-** We engaged Canadian Haz-Mat Environmental Ltd, a specialist in hazardous waste removal, to safely remove all toxic materials prior to demolition. We do not have any tenants at the site and the building has been demolished.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT GUIDELINES**

Our proposal would move from a vacant lot with R2 zoning to a Site-Specific zoning with 4 units in total. In particular we would like to bring the following to your attention:

### **Context:**

1. There are large apartment buildings, a townhouse complex and a heritage home converted to apartments in close proximity to our buildings. As a 4-unit strata complex, we believe this proposal will effectively act as a transition in the current context and continue to fit in as the neighbourhood evolves

### **Streetscape**

1. Only 2 of the 4 units will be easily seen fronting Simcoe St and these will be slightly above ground level facing the street. These two homes will have private street friendly patios and yards accessed from the sidewalk up a few steps to a patio, providing a positive relationship to the street. The rear two homes will have fairly large back yards.
2. Privacy will be achieved through medium height plantings, fencing and new trees
3. There is multiple bump in and outs to the building surface as well as a variety of claddings including; brick, cement panels and vertical siding which enhance the look and interest of the in relationship to the street

### **Exterior Finishes**

1. Primary cladding materials proposed are brick, cement panels, and cedar. These materials were chosen because there are precedents for using them in the neighbourhood, and because together they provide robust exteriors, variety, and warmth.
2. Open Spaces and Landscaping:
3. In addition to private front patios each unit will have private back or front yards including raised garden beds.

### **Parking:**

1. all private parking is in garages with one additional visitor parking spot on site. The parking is all accessed from one driveway on Simcoe St

## **VARIANCES**

The proposal is requesting to move from R2 to site specific zoning with the following variances to the zoning requested:

1. Site Coverage: The R2 zoning allows for 40% coverage and our development is 36.6%
2. Front, Rear and Side Yard setbacks: All front and side setbacks are within R2 zoning. The variance requested is a decrease in rear yard coverage from 17m (55 ft) to 7.46m (24.4 ft). The proposed setbacks have been discussed with the planning staff.

## **SAFETY and SECURITY**

Unfortunately, crime and vandalism are on the rise in our community. We have addressed this in our plan by:

1. Installing motion sensor lighting externally around the property and in particular at the driveway area
2. Providing each unit with large private locking garages to store cars, bikes, toys etc
3. Creating a strata complex where the 4 homes can monitor their neighbours properties as a group

4. Planning a number of windows so that occupants can have site access
5. Providing fencing at the side and back of the property to deter intruders
6. Placing the external bike and garbage area in a spot that is not visible to the street to deter theft

## **TRANSPORTATION**

This site is located in one of the most walkable neighbourhoods in the city and is in close proximity to public transit. Our proposal meets the automobile parking and the bicycle parking standards.

## **HERITAGE**

Not applicable

## **GREEN BUILDING FEATURES**

### *Site Selection:*

Being situated next to James Bay Village, residents will be a stone's throw from amenities, as well as being walking distance from the downtown core, with excellent access to public transportation. Residents will have the option to live car free. We will provide individual EV rated electric charging conduit to promote Electric car use.

### *Transportation:*

We have provided an exterior bike rack and each unit will have a private garage for secure bicycle storage. As well, as mentioned each unit will have the ability to charge electric vehicles.

### *Energy Efficiency:*

This project will meet Step 3 of BCBC Energy Step code.

The building is designed to have a very efficient form in order to improve the Thermal Demand Energy Intensity.

Lighting - energy efficient LED lighting will be used throughout.

Daylighting - Numerous windows are designed to bring sunlight deeper into the interior spaces, reducing the need for electric lighting during the day.

Water- Low flow fixtures will be used throughout.

### *Landscaping and Urban Forest:*

Our landscaping will include grass back, side and front yards with numerous other plantings.

We have included a variety of fencing and cedars to provide privacy and beauty to the property.

We added a tree in the front and rear of the site. Please see the landscape drawings for details and landscape cost estimate

### *Urban Agriculture:*

Our proposal includes raised garden beds which residents may use for growing vegetables.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Being located in a neighbourhood that already contains multi-unit buildings, there is currently adequate sewer, water, sidewalks, roads and parks within the area.

## **CONCLUSION**

The development tracker shows that we have received only positive feedback about our proposal. We have made changes which respond to the feedback of informal meetings with neighbours and have addressed questions, concerns and changes requested by City of Victoria Planning department. 557 Simcoe Street is a large lot that we believe should be used to support sensitive infill to James Bay. By Providing a high quality, well designed strata complex in a neighbourhood that has the infrastructure in place to support it, we feel this development is a positive and sustainable addition to our neighbourhood and request your approval.