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

Dear Mayor & Council

Re: REVISED PROPOSAL (March 2024)

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 older and unsuitable rental units, of which ??? are currently occupied.



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## 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 neighbours and considering City Comments, we are pleased to submit this revised proposal for the following:

- An 11-unit Strata Development consisting of 9 3-bedroom 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.

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

Key Policy / Document	Relevant Policies / Guiding Principles
• <b>The Victoria Housing Strategy – 2016-2022</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A focus on renters</li><li>• Increasing housing supply and housing choice - Providing Missing Middle Options for families</li><li>• Providing for family housing (2 and 3 BR Units)</li></ul>
• <b>Victoria's Housing Future</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifies the need for more housing across various sizes and tenures in Victoria.</li></ul>
• <b>Fernwood Neighbourhood Plan (2022);</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage diverse housing in size, tenure, and form to support diverse populations.</li><li>• Encourage housing that is designed to be livable and complement its surroundings.</li><li>• Enable housing forms and scales that can support diverse tenures.</li><li>• 6.15: Space for a diverse mix of housing</li><li>• 6.17: Flexibility for Diverse Types and Tenures</li><li>• 6.18: Heritage Conservation and Design</li></ul>
• <b>City of Victoria Missing Middle Design Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6.1: Site, orient and design corner townhouses with facades and unit entries facing and accessed from both fronting streets</li><li>• 9: Heritage Conserving Infill design criteria</li></ul>

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



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- To subdivide the subject properties to create two new development parcels;
- Rezone the future properties to site-specific CD Bylaws to permit the development of an 11-unit strata townhouse project and a 73 Unit purpose-built rental building
- Separate Development Permits (DP) for each future parcel;
- 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 Rental Apartments at Sequoia :

- Changing the plan from 2 buildings to a single L-shaped building with the massing focused on Pandora.
- Massing is setback at the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> levels, with a unique structural design, to be seismically safe while reducing mass appearance along Pandora.
- Tapering the height of the buildings down to northern neighbours to reduce overlook and maintain the privacy of our neighbours.
- Increasing rear yard setbacks to neighbouring homes to preserve trees and reduce excavation requirements.
- Reducing the shadow impacts on neighbouring properties during critical times of the year.
- The 8 3 BR family units are designed so that the quiet side of the units (bedrooms) faces the northern neighbours.
- Improved access to outdoor amenities for future tenants and residents between the Strata and Townhouse development.

#### The Townhouses at Sequoia

- The number of townhouses was reduced by 1 to improve internal circulation and provide more opportunities for pedestrian connections to the shared outdoor amenity spaces.
- Refined the architecture to be reflective of heritage character (roof pitch, design, materials, colours);
- Development of a duplex renovation to the heritage house to retain its character and function as a residential feature.
- Use of porous materials throughout to improve stormwater management.
- All townhouses are now 3 BR units to facilitate family investment in Fernwood.



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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. It also provides the opportunity to protect and preserve the large sequoia tree in the heart of the development.

#### 1342 Pandora – Restoring Heritage

To ensure that the designated Heritage House (the Maclaughlin Residence) is prominently featured, we propose to relocate it approximately 4 metres south while keeping its prominent corner location as identified in the conservation plan. By restoring the home's exterior, creating two new modern units within the building, and installing new healthy, aesthetically pleasing landscaping, we hope to share this historic asset with the community. The process by which the Heritage House will be relocated is included in Appendix I. Nickel Brothers has provided a work plan that outlines the approach and steps required to preserve this asset during its relocation.

Extensive structural upgrades will be required to ensure the home at 1342 Pandora will meet BCBC requirements; a detailed review from structural engineers (Glotman Simpson) demonstrates that this is a feasible approach to protecting the building (attached as Appendix II).

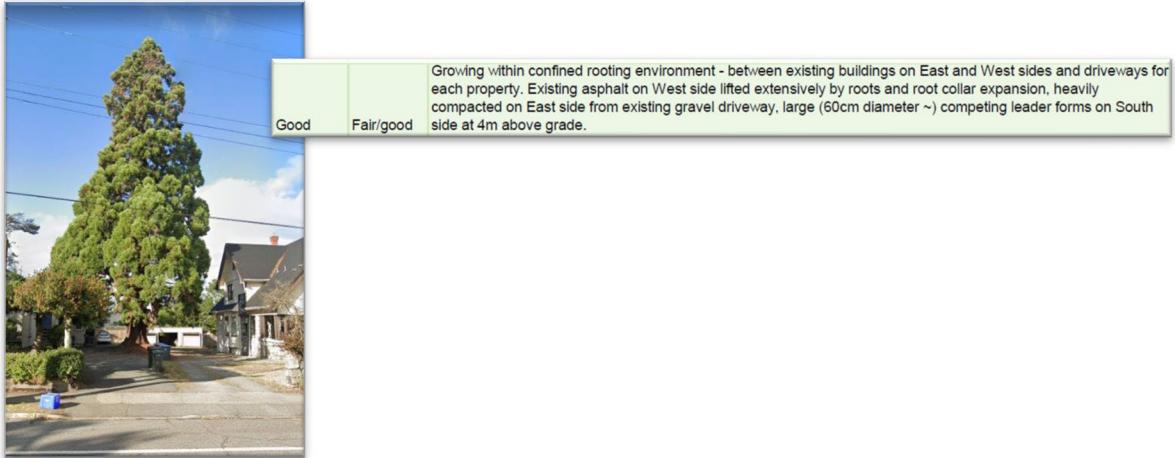
With guidance from DLA Heritage Consultants, original materials and features will be restored, replaced or rebuilt as per the Conservation Plan. The home, originally built in 1883, features on some of Victoria's earliest planning and insurance maps, and we look forward to ensuring its history is not lost. In particular, the colour palette identified by DLA will reflect the Victorian houses of this era. (Appendix III)

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. A new 'stonewall' that is consistent in design with the original wall will be reinstalled, utilizing as much of the original material as possible.

#### 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. Furthermore, we intend to create an active residential mews in the site interior that intertwines and connects both developments through pathways, thus creating a communal outdoor space that will be shared between the two proposed developments.

Figure 8: Sequoia Tree for Retention



Stormwater will be managed onsite, and the protected sequoia's root zone will be improved by removing the existing hard landscaping (asphalt) and installing soft landscaping and permeable ground cover around the tree. Through detailed design, further opportunities to manage rainwater through connecting downspouts and into the site landscaping

Figure 9: Conceptual Landscape Plan (Townhouses)



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 plazas).

Furthermore, based on the city's 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.

## Public Engagement

Primex Investments has met with the community multiple times, including 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.



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The version of the plan submitted today represents the middle ground between financial realities, sound design, and community-based plan 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 more excellent value - the residents' current rent or the CMHC average rent for the unit type.	



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## 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 than three times 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 architectural and sustainable design standard based on Step Code 3 or better.
4. Utilize land efficiently with an aggregate density of 1.7 FAR.
5. Orient development to Fernwood and Pandora with street fronting/facing units, 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.

## Appendices

- Point by Point Response to City of Victoria Letter
- Nickel Brother’s Relocation Plan
- DLA Consultants Updated Conservation Plan
- Glotman Simpon Structural Details for 1342 Pandora
- Summit Brooke Construction Phasing / Schedule