

# **MOLTO BENE ENTERPRISES**

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September 1, 2023

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

**RE: Missing Middle Housing Development Permit for 1734 Hollywood Crescent**

Dear Mayor and Council,

We request a Development Permit to build 7 townhouses on our 616.53m<sup>2</sup> (6,636.27sq.ft.) corner lot at Hollywood Crescent and Robertson Street. Block A has 4 units including a 1-bedroom 'adaptable' suite, a 3-bedroom suite, and two 2-bedroom suites. Block B has 3 units including a 3-bedroom with an attached 1 bedroom second suite, a 3 -bedroom suite and a 2-bedroom suite.

Block A has a building height of 11.29m (37.04ft). Block B has a building height of 11.64m (38.19ft.). The maximum building height in the R1-G MMH Zone is 9.5m (31.17ft.) for flat roofs and 10.5m (34.45ft.) for other roof styles. A variance is requested.

Our lot width is 17.53m (57.51ft.). The minimum required lot width is 20m (65.62ft.). A variance is requested.

Our open space is 240.2m<sup>2</sup> (2,589.49sq. ft.) or 38.96% of the lot area. The minimum required open space is 277.44m<sup>2</sup> (2986.34sq. ft.) or 45%. A variance is requested.

Our proposal is inspired and informed by the MMH Policy and Design Guidelines adopted in January 2023 and enacted on March 12, 2023. And with the exception of the 3 requested variances, our proposal is consistent with the regulations in the R1-G MMH Zone.

Staff encouraged us to consider MMH redevelopment for this site. And so, this is a revised proposal which changes our application from converting the single detached house to a four-plex to redeveloping the site for a 7-unit townhouse.

## **APPROVING ON MERIT**

This redevelopment proposal provides a fulsome multi-generational townhouse(s) for 8 households. It achieves all of the MMH objectives including neighbourhood planning best practice in 2023, inclusivity, aging in place and affordability.

It is located in a low-density neighbourhood well serviced by transit, schools, parks and open spaces. The redevelopment increases the tax base assessment and improves the streetscape and vitality of Hollywood Crescent and Robertson Street. It reuses and redevelops fully, carefully, completely and sustainably residential land within the urban containment boundary; a scarce and diminishing resource. It has site and context fit and is designed to minimize impact to the adjacent neighbors. It is consistent with the OCP and the Neighbourhood Plan, has high ERD values and exhibits good city planning, urban design, landscape design, building form and character.

This application deserves to be approved on its own merits. We look forward to unanimous approval of the first Missing Middle Housing Development Permit in Victoria.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph A. Calenda". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Joseph A. Calenda, MCIP, (Rtd.), DTM  
MOLTO BENE ENTERPRISES

## UNPUBLISHED LETTER TO THE EDITOR – TIMES COLONIST

### Missing Middle Housing - Failed - Not Yet!

I too am disappointed with the very limited interest in MMH. But not surprised. Staff was clear from the start the profit margin in redeveloping a traditional single-family lot for a townhouse or houseplex is 7% to 8%. Developers must demonstrate a minimum 15% profit just to qualify for financing. Clearly, it's not for everyone.

The MMH objectives include affordability, inclusivity, aging in place and neighbourhood planning best practise. The policy, as is, will implement neighbourhood planning best practise. Which is to say, it's a good idea in 2023 to include townhouses and houseplexes on many of our single-family streets. The policy does provide for aging in place. Which is to say, a homeowner may convert (or demolish) his house to a houseplex and/or a townhouse. And that allows his family to continue living on the same street. Albeit in a different housing form to age in place affordably. That's the idea anyway. And the policy will allow inclusivity on many of our exclusively single-family streets. Which is to say, middle income singles, seniors and families are more likely to rent, own and benefit from townhouses and houseplexes on an otherwise only single-family street.

It's the affordability objective which is most troublesome. Affordability is achieved by including affordable elements into the houseplex or townhouse; below market homeownership, secondary suites, disabled (adaptable) units, family suitable units, below market rental units, etc. This is challenging from both a design and cost benefit perspective.

Perhaps the greatest failing in MMH policy are the design guidelines themselves. These are intended to make redevelopment compatible with and/or complementary to the way the street was built 100 years ago. And so, we have the design guidelines and building envelope regulations as written. These may be the 'mistakes' in the policy. What would be wrong with townhouses having more lot coverage, bigger building envelopes and footprints, more height and more floor space ratio? And why not have beefier and higher houseplexes? Would these designs not be as compatible with and complementary to the existing single-family houses as the approved MMH guidelines? If not why not? Is it a matter of degree and subjective opinion? Simply put, townhouses and houseplexes should be bigger than currently permitted. Perhaps that will encourage more redevelopment.

We are preparing MMH plans for a 616m<sup>2</sup> corner lot in Gonzales. The proposal includes 7 stacked townhouses in 2 buildings with a secondary suite, adaptable unit and family suitable units. Presumably, the affordability objective is achieved. However, we need a variance to the lot width, minimum open space and building height. And that suggests the design guidelines need to be softened.

I look forward to the staff update report to Council. I do not consider the MMH initiative to have failed. It was enacted on March 12th. Nobody expected a huge uptake after only 6 months in a high inflation and speculative housing market. I wonder if Premier Eby's 'Homes for People' legislation will influence the staff report? We shall see.

Joe Calenda - Consulting City Planner - Victoria