

September 20, 2024

File: Village on the Green – Affordable Housing Redevelopment

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

Dear Development Services – City of Victoria:

RE: Delegated Development Permit Application for 1132 & 1138 Johnson Street

Village on the Green Affordable Housing Redevelopment- Expanded Site

Please accept this letter and application for a Delegated Development Permit for 1132 Johnson Street, known as Village on the Green (VOG), and the adjacent property at 1138 Johnson Street. The attached proposal for the expanded VOG redevelopment project provides a significant opportunity for the neighborhood of Fernwood, and the City of Victoria to increase the amount of much-needed affordable rental housing in the area. This housing will be home to low-moderate income families, seniors, couples, single occupants, and individuals otherwise at risk of experiencing homelessness.

CRHC Introduction

As the largest social housing provider in the capital region, the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) has a mandate to develop and manage affordable housing to meet the needs of people living in the capital region. The CRHC has been operating for almost 40 years and currently provides approximately 1,900 units of affordable housing across over 50 separate developments. The CRHC is committed to increasing housing opportunities that are safe, inclusive, sustainable, and remain affordable as the lives of the families change and grow. This project will allow the CRHC to provide a significant increase to this type of housing within an area of the region in great need of additional rental housing options.

Background

In February 2024, the Redevelopment of Village on the Green site received a Delegated Development Permit (DDP) from the City of Victoria (City) for building two 6-storey buildings over a common parkade structure with 140 affordable housing units within the 1132 Johnson boundary.

After the DDP was received, the surface parking lot that borders the southeast corner of the lot at 1138 Johnson Street was put up for sale. Therefore, CRHC evaluated the potential of incorporating this site into the previously approved redevelopment plan. Given the benefits, such as increasing the number of new affordable housing units by 20 through a straightforward extension of the south building along Johnson Street, CRHC approached the owner of the 1138 Johnson Street for land acquisition. The CRHC now has an accepted offer to purchase this lot with the sale agreement set to be finalized in Spring 2025. This led to expansion of the VOG

affordable housing redevelopment plan to include both 1132 and 1138 Johnson Street lots. Therefore, a new DDP is required to provide land use permission on the expanded site for the proposed expanded redevelopment.

Expanded Site Proposal Summary

The property at 1132 Johnson Street is owned by the CRHC and currently provides housing to 38 individuals and families in affordable townhouse style units. In an analysis of their assets, this site was identified as a priority site to redevelop due to its current low density, urban location with immediate proximity to amenities and transportation networks, and the age and condition of the existing buildings.

The property at 1138 Johnson Street is a parking lot currently owned by Cook Street Plaza Limited Partnership and Cook and Yates Holdings Ltd. As noted above, CRHC has an accepted offer to purchase this lot. The sale agreement includes a set of conditions that must be satisfied before the sale is finalized.

This expanded redevelopment project, similar to the original project, aligns with the City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (OCP) and related policy, which identifies the site as appropriate for multi-residential development up to 6 storeys in height with a density of up to 2.0 FSR. The proposed expanded redevelopment will create 122 net new units (160 total units) for low- to moderate-income families and individuals, 32 of which are targeted for those at greatest risk of homelessness.

The expanded redevelopment project features include:

- 160 new affordable units, with a net gain of 122 units
- 29 new family-oriented 3-bedroom units, with a net gain of 19
- 16 accessible units (10% of total units), with consideration for adaptable units, in compliance with CMHC's universal design guidelines, for all remaining units
- CRHC commitment to re-house all existing tenants
- Rental affordability secured
- Target of BC Energy Code - Step 4
- Alignment with Zero Carbon Step Code emissions targets
- Enhanced active transportation amenities
- On-site amenities including underground parking, in-suite laundry, indoor common area/amenity lounge, private outdoor amenity courtyard and children's play area

Contained within this letter is a summary of the project, including site details, zoning and municipal policy context, and sustainability features.

Site Context

The expanded redevelopment project site is located just east of Cook Street with frontages on both Pandora Avenue and Johnson Street. The Pandora frontage is on a one-way portion of the street that looks directly across to Harris Green Park. The site is bounded by a recently redeveloped four storey mixed-use development to the west (The Wade) and a three storey multi-unit residential building and a recently constructed six storey residential building (The Row) to the east, as well as a 6 storey residential development currently under construction across Johnson Street (Haven). The site is in close proximity to the downtown core and has

major transportation routes directly adjacent the site on Johnson Street, Cook Street and Pandora Avenue.



Figure1: Neighbourhood Context (courtesy of LHRA)

Municipal Policy Framework

The expanded redevelopment project, similar to the original proposal, has been designed to align with the objectives and key criteria outlined in the City of Victoria's OCP and applicable design guidelines. The site sits within an area designated as Urban Residential, which supports multi-unit residential development up to 6 storeys and 2.0 FSR. The proposed redevelopment works within these parameters as well provides a meaningful contribution towards the Housing and Homelessness goals within the OCP (section 13). The additional housing created by the Village on the Green Affordable Housing Redevelopment widens the range of non-market rental options in response to the current and future demand in the community.

Conformance with key parameters within the OCP allow the project to be eligible for the Fast Track for Affordable Housing (former Rapid Deployment of Affordable Housing) program along with the following qualifying principles:

- Multiple Dwelling is a permitted use within the existing R3-1 zoning.
- The project is wholly owned and operated by the CRHC.
- Affordability and rental tenure will be secured through a legal agreement.
- The project is designed to align with the applicable design guidelines.
- The proposed density is within the Schedule O maximum of 2.0 FSR.

This program was adopted by Council in 2022 as a key part of the City's Housing Strategy. This policy aims to accelerate the construction of new non-market affordable rental and co-operative housing in the City. The expanded Village on the Green Affordable Housing Redevelopment is an opportunity to put this policy to action and deliver housing that responds to the immediate needs of the community as well as the City's vision of growth.

Design Overview

The expanded redevelopment, like the original proposal, proposes two separate mid-rise buildings over a common parkade structure, creating an open courtyard at the centre of the site. The new design features a longer, extended south building along Johnson Street, adding 20 more new affordable housing units. This configuration provides the additional density needed while also allowing a significant amount of green space on the site. Continuity of the streetscape is achieved through the positioning of the buildings along each frontage at a setback that respects neighbouring conditions and steps further at upper levels to acknowledge varying building heights and reduce the overall perceived massing. The buildings also step down two-storeys toward the central courtyard to improve daylighting to this space as well as reduce overlook to neighboring buildings. These two lower "wings" afford additional density on the site, creating a private communal outdoor space, while maintaining visual continuity with the similar green space within the neighbouring development (The Wade).

Sustainability Features

The expanded Village on the Green redevelopment, like the original proposal, is targeting BC Energy Step Code - Step 4, as well as Zero Carbon Step Code Emissions Level 4. This energy standard is a more stringent standard than what is currently required by the City of Victoria and aligns with the CRD's goals of accelerating energy efficiency and emissions reduction in new buildings and infrastructure. The project is being designed to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced by the building in order to meet the emissions targets recently introduced by the City. The design also includes stormwater management features through the use of rain gardens, which will reduce and delay the volume of flow into the municipal storm system. The project also facilitates increased use of active transportation options which helps reduce the reliance on motor vehicles.

Vehicle & Bicycle Parking

Vehicle and bicycle parking is provided on the site in line with the objectives of increasing the use of active transportation options, and increasing rental affordability through efficient site planning and reduction of related construction costs. Long term bicycle parking is provided within the parkade with enhanced provisions such as E bike charging infrastructure, cargo bikes stalls, and 28 more stalls than the municipal requirements. Like the original proposal, the vehicle parking access is off Pandora Avenue, as opposed to Johnson Street in the existing condition, due to the much lower traffic volumes seen on this side for improved traffic flow and safety. The project provides 50 vehicle parking stalls which is an increase from the existing stalls currently on the site. The related parking variance requested is supported by the following features:

- Enhanced bicycle parking further to municipal requirements
- Central location of the site in close proximity to commercial amenities and directly adjacent to major public transportation routes.
- Working with car share providers to evaluate and respond to demand in the area.

- CRHC developments within the same neighborhood with higher parking counts which give alternative options to prospective tenants.

Conclusion

The expanded Village on the Green Affordable Housing Redevelopment offers an opportunity to make an even more significant contribution of affordable rental housing in the Fernwood neighbourhood, while maintaining or enhancing the design parameters from the original proposal. This project also advances important municipal and regional sustainability goals and aligns with the vision for growth outlined in the OCP and related municipal policies.

The Fernwood neighbourhood, like many areas of the region, has a pressing need for additional affordable housing options, and the CRHC is excited to work with the City of Victoria to help realize this affordable housing project as an important and positive contribution to the community.

Sincerely,



Mahnaz Farzad
Manager, Development Strategies
Regional Housing, Capital Regional District

cc: Rob Fowles, Manager, Construction & Capital Projects, Capital Regional District
Don Elliot, Senior Manager, Capital Region Housing Corporation
Paul Hammond, Principal, Low Hammond Rowe Architects

List of Documents Submitted

- 1) Delegated Permit Application Form
- 2) Letter of authorization from registered owner of 1132 Johnson Street
- 3) Letter of authorization from registered owners of 1138 Johnson Street
- 4) Certificate of Titles
- 5) Copies of both titles' restrictions
- 6) Architectural Drawings
- 7) Landscape Drawings
- 8) Civil Drawings
- 9) Arborist Report