

City of Victoria
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Attn: Mayor and Members of Council
(past submissions September 30, 2021, January 25, 2021, June 15, 2021,
November 2, 2021)

Updated: June 16, 2022

RE: RE-ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT PERMIT APPLICATION: 1042-1044 RICHARDSON STREET

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

1248330 BC LTD. is pleased to propose a Rezoning and Development Permit Application for a five-storey (+rooftop deck), 20-unit, purpose-built rental building with market and affordable units at 1042-1044 Richardson Street. Guided by the Official Community Plan (OCP), and a number of recently adopted policies and plans, such as the Inclusionary Housing Policy (2019), and Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan (2019), and Multi-unit Residential Design Guidelines (2012), the goal of this project is to retain, expand, and diversify the stock of rental housing in the 'Rental Retention Area' sub-area of Fairfield. The body of this letter serves to explain how this proposal aligns with existing policies and will contribute the Fairfield Neighbourhood of Victoria.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT, SITE CHARACTERISTICS & EXISTING ZONING

1042-1044 Richardson St. is located mid-block on the 1000 block of Richardson St. on a flat lot that is artificially elevated from the street (it is one building/three legal lots east of Cook St.). The project site is comprised of one legal lot that is 668m² lot (7190 sq. ft) in size.

The site is situated in a densely populated portion of Fairfield that is in close proximity to the downtown core and surrounded by a mix of multi-residential units including a blend of strata condominiums, rental apartments, and townhouses. To the east of the property is a large three-storey rental apartment building (1050 Richardson St.). North of the site (1035 McClure St.) is a four-storey condo building containing 29 units, with at grade parking both uncovered and enclosed within a single storey garage that runs along the westerly property line of 1042 Richardson St. Across the Street from the site is four storey rental apartment building. Other nearby multi-unit properties on Richardson St. include two townhouse developments, a four storey 20-unit condo building, and two other four-storey rental apartment buildings.

The 1000 Block of Richardson St. exemplifies the accretion of urban form and character and is distinguished by diverse architectural forms with generally large footprints that were completed in different eras. This ranges from traditional walk-up apartments completed in the 1950s and 1960s, to more contemporary strata condo and townhouse projects completed in the 1990s and early 2000s. The most recent addition to the streetscape is 1020 Richardson St. (Terra Verde by Abstract Developments completed in 2011), which presents to the street as a contemporary design with a more traditional colour palette. The subject site at 1042-1044 Richardson St. is notably the only site on the block that has not been developed to a higher density (with the exception of heritage houses fronting Vancouver St.), and would be the first rental project to be added to the street since the 1960s.

The site is currently zoned R-K (Medium Density Attached Dwelling District) and hosts two structures with a total of five rental units:

- The main house that contains three one-bedroom units and a bachelor suite;
- A separate carriage house / garden suite (bachelor suite).

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

This re-zoning and development permit application is requesting to re-zone the current site from R-K to a site-specific zone to allow for construction of a 5-storey (+rooftop deck), 20-unit purpose built rental building with a mix of market rental and non-market (affordable) rental units. The following unit mix is proposed:

- Three 3-bedroom units
- Fifteen 1-bedroom units (three units offered at affordable rental rates¹ with legal agreement)
- Two bachelor units (both to offered at an affordable rental rate with legal agreement)

This proposal aims to provide a diverse and needed mix of units to the community. This includes a number of large family-oriented units (3 bedroom units) (15% of units), affordable units (20% of units), and accessible or barrier free units that aim to support aging in place. The street level unit on Floor 1 is designed to be fully accessible, with elements such as oversized doorways, reduced counter height, grab bars, and lowered switches and outlets, and a dedicated space for scooter parking in the unit.

Height and density proposed in this application (1.76: 1:0) reflects the site location being approximately two blocks (~400M) from the Downtown Core neighbourhood boundary, where existing building size and density considerations for re-development quickly transition to up to 5:1 FSR and beyond as you move closer to the core. The site is also close to other high-density areas such as Cook St. Village (~400M), and the Harris Green Neighbourhood boundary (~350M), where re-development density up to 5.5:1 FSR is considered.

This proposal necessitates the removal of existing buildings from the site, and as such, will displace existing tenants. Consistent with the City of Victoria Tenant Assistance Policy (2019), a Tenant Assistance Plan has been developed, and has been provided to existing tenants. In this plan, eligible tenants will be offered compensation based on tenure, moving expenses, and the right of first refusal at a reduced rate.

To limit contributions to landfill resulting from the removal of existing structures, efforts will be made to deconstruct and recycle as much of the main building as possible, and to lift and remove the garden suite from the site for re-use at another property.

ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

The proposed building form and character offers a well-mannered, contemporary expression to the varied streetscape. A grade level entry to the ground-oriented suite is complemented by the building's common pedestrian entry and a distinct, highly visible walkable stair that provides vertical access to all of the above grade suites and is adjacent to an oversized elevator designed to transport commuter bikes to each floor.

The building form is reinforced by a material palette that is durable and timeless, with accents and detailing providing colour, quality character elements and animation. Random articulation and use of multiple materials are avoided in order to reinforce the building as a participant in the fabric of the streetscape, not an object in its own right. Articulation is deliberate and reinforces a sense of entry, a distinction of public and private for the ground level suites, and a stepping back at upper storey suites to modulate the weight of the building. Open, screened walkways and balconies juxtapose strong vertical elements of stairs and elevator shaft resulting in a play of solid/void and shadow/light. Care and attention to limit light spill has been taken with an exterior lighting plan in place which avoids the use of pot lights, and focuses on alternative lighting solutions, ensuring that there is no obtrusive lighting on adjacent properties.

¹ Affordable rental rates that align with the City of Victoria's [Inclusionary Housing Policy](#) will be secured by legal agreement (for low to moderate income households).

Both balcony and rooftop terrace elements, along with window placement are carefully considered to avoid overlook and secure privacy for adjacent neighbours, while also optimizing livability for the tenants and their right to daylight and ventilation within their suites. Each tenant is provided a front door on the common, external walkways, with proximate access to bicycle/mobility parking on floors 2-5. Each suite has a balcony and all tenants have access to an expansive rooftop terrace, with occupied areas set back from the roof edge to ensure direct overlook to adjacent properties is mitigated. A prominent, daylight stair provides animation on the site, as well as encouraging tenants who are walking to take the stair rather than the elevator.

Off-street parking is proposed to be underground to hide parking from public view and allow for the rear of the building to be a dedicated greenspace. Trees and soft landscaping buffer rear and side yards to adjacent properties, as well as softening the frontage of the building to the street. Further opportunities for landscaping are introduced through planters along the open walkways and at the roof terrace, providing a canvas for tenants to individualize their suites and gain direct access to nature.

DEVELOPMENT PERMIT & POLICY GUIDELINES

Below is a summary of how building design aligns with the [Official Community Plan](#) (2012; Updated February 27, 2020), [Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan](#) (2019), and [City of Victoria's Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial & Industrial Development \(2012\)](#).

1. Official Community Plan

This site is designated as Urban Residential in the Official Community Plan (OCP). In the OCP, Urban Residential sites support mid-rise multi-unit buildings up to approximately six stories and floor space ratios ranging from up to 1.2:1.0 to 2.5:1.0 depending on location. This proposal aligns with the OCP in terms of use and density. Character Place Features outlined in Section 6 of the OCP (p. 39) were achieved through design. These include presenting primary doorways towards the street, providing front yard landscaping, and collective driveway access to rear parking.

2. Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan

This site is located in the Rental 'Retention Sub-area' of Fairfield. In this area, development that retains and/or increases the supply of rental stock is encouraged (Section 8), with development up to approximately 2.0: 1.0 FSR and six storeys (20 Meters) to be considered (p. 74, 2019). At 5 storeys and 1.76: 1.0 FSR, this proposal is consistent with building height and density guidelines set out in the Fairfield Plan. This proposal is also consistent with rental replacement requirements outlined in sec. 8.1.1. of the plan, which requires increases in zoned density be considered where an equivalent number and kind (e.g. number of bedrooms) and units is maintained on-site, and secured as rental housing with a maximum rent specified. In this regard, this proposal exceeds this requirement by providing replacement units at affordable rental rates and six units, where only five are required.

With housing affordability and increased diversity of housing options being central to the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, unit mix was selected to meet specific needs set out in the local area plan. Specifically, the inclusion of 3-bedroom units, affordable units, and accessible units, as sec. 9.1.2 stated that more housing is needed which is geared towards "families (3+bedrooms), seniors and working people with low incomes".

Form and Character Objectives for Urban Residential Areas (Sec. 8.8, p. 77) in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan were used as a guide in the design of this proposal. Being pedestrian-centric was foundational to building design. This was achieved by prominently featuring the main staircase on Richardson St. and flooding it with natural light to enhance usability and connecting units with an exterior walkways where bicycle parking is conveniently located

near the entrances to individual units. Finally, a shared rooftop deck is intended to serve as a comfortably sized outdoor gathering place for residents to enjoy.

3. Multi-unit Residential Design Guidelines:

As per direction of Planning staff, details of design were guided by the City of Victoria Design Guidelines for Multi-Unit Residential, Commercial and Industrial (2012). Below are examples of how the proposal aligns with these guidelines, with specific reference to site siting, massing, street relationship and exterior finishes:

- **Site siting:** The siting of the proposed building maintains the continuity of the street edge on Richardson St., providing some space for front yard landscaping (Sec. 2.3.2). Despite being set relatively close to the street (2.4m from property line), the generous boulevard on Richardson St. softens the interface of the building with Richardson St. Siting the building close to the front of the property also allows for spatial separation from neighbouring buildings (5M to the rear property line and 3M from the interior property lines – *with the exception of an exterior staircase*). The result of pushing setbacks away from interior property lines by nearly a third of its overall site width (of 18.28M), is a slender structure that, while taller than neighbouring buildings, does not present dominantly on the street. This also enables sunlight to penetrate shared spaces between buildings.
- **Massing:** The buildings massing in relationship to the street is reduced by stepping floors back from the street, beginning with stepping on floor 5, and a shared rooftop amenity space above (Sec. 3.5). Articulation in the massing is functional and speaks to the solid/void resulting from the introduction of exterior walkways, breaking down the overall mass both on the street and in relationship to other buildings along the street.
- **Streetscape / Street-relationship:** The underground drive aisle access for the building is located on the westerly side of the property to situate parking and circulation adjacent parking circulation for 1035 McClure St. The building interfaces with the street by providing both a prominent shared entrance as well as an individual accessible unit entrance with a connection to the public sidewalk (See. Sec. 2.3-2.4). Privacy impacts of adjacent buildings were carefully considered in the design, with completion of a window overlay early in the design process. The majority of principal windows face away from existing buildings, with most windows facing neighbouring properties at heights where views into neighbouring units would not be possible (i.e. floors 1-4).
- **Exterior Finishes:** A clear palette of materials reinforces the overall massing of base-middle-top, while also introducing accent elements and colour. The finishes deliberately avoid a mashup of material, colour and texture and relies on a well composed, intentional architecture that is durable, timeless and speaks to the contemporary products used in buildings today. This ensures that the building is maintainable and weathers/ages consistently, rather than presenting a varied protocol for maintenance through the life of the building.
- **Landscape:** The proposed landscape plan optimizes replacement trees along the building frontage, sideyards, rear yard and rooftop terrace. A mix of soft ground covers and hardscape pavers and surfacing are composed to reinforce paths and movement on the site, while also providing areas for drainage and planting. The upper exterior walkways, as well as balconies and rooftop terrace invite planting opportunities and play a role in managing stormwater on the site. The landscape treatments compliment the building and are optimized to buffer edges and provide biophilic elements to the building tenants.

TRANSPORTATION

This proposal is requesting a variance in off-street parking, which is lower than the minimum parking requirements outlined in the City of Victoria's current Zoning By-Law (Schedule C: Off Street Parking). The project is proposing to provide a total of nine off-street parking spaces, with the current bylaw requiring eighteen spaces.

Watt Consulting Group conducted a parking analysis relating to this proposal examining expected demand and recommending a number of Transportation Demand Measures (TDM) aimed at reducing the use of private vehicles as a transportation typology, and a demand for on-site and off-street parking). This proposal provides all of the TDM measures recommended by Watt Consulting Group. These include:

1. Committing to purchase of an electric or hybrid Modo carshare vehicle for the site and providing memberships to each unit, which will provide a viable mobility option for residents and reduce dependency on vehicle ownership.
 - a. A dedicated on-street parking stall for car share with an accompanying electric vehicle charging station is proposed. This stall would increase visibility and promote car sharing use in the larger community. On-street charging infrastructure will be constructed by the developer to the satisfaction of the Director of Engineering and Public Works. Following installation, ownership of the charging station will be transferred to the City of Victoria. An off-street parking stall will be provided should the car share vehicle need to be relocated due to street maintenance or renewal. This parking stall will be used for visitor parking in the interim. Car share memberships and usage credits will be provided to all residents.
2. Providing 3 electric bikes of varying sizes (including 1 electric cargo bike) for the common use of residents with 3-year maintenance costs for the general upkeep of the bikes.
3. Providing 68 long-term bike parking spaces (3.4 spaces per unit), which are conveniently located either in a secure underground bike room or near the entry door of unit on floor 2-5. Electric bike charging is accessible for all long-term bicycle parking stalls, and 75% of the total long-term spaces can accommodate cargo bikes (46 stalls). Note: this space could also be used for other types of sustainable transpiration devices to meet the unique transportation needs of residents, such as electric scooters (i.e. vespas, mobility scooters, standing powered scooters, etc.);

As indicated in the Watt Consulting Report:

"[By] Committing to all four TDM measures [it] is anticipated to reduce resident parking demand by 5 spaces, which would bring the total site demand to 9 parking spaces (7 resident, 2 visitor) and in line with the proposed supply. This would result in all resident and visitor vehicles being accommodated off-street with no vehicles required to park on-street. As such, this is not anticipated to result in a negative impact on the neighbourhood. With the applicant committing to all the TDM measures, the provision of 9 off-street parking spaces is supported."

As outlined in detail in the parking analysis, proximity to the downtown core and amenities at Cook St. Village is central to the parking variance request. It is expected that the site will service those who are within walking distance to their place of work, and being that it is a rental building, will have lower vehicle ownership rates than typical strata condominium projects.

According to walkscore.com the site is a 'walkers paradise' (walkscore of 92) and has 'excellent' access to public transit (transit score of 72). It is also situated on a dedicated All Ages and Abilities (AAA) bicycle route and is a 'biker's paradise' with a bike score of 100. The location in proximity to established and emerging bike routes, influenced design of the building to encourage and support the use of bicycles.

IMPACTS

At five stories and a rooftop deck, this proposal will be taller than neighbouring structures to the east and north, which are three and four stories respectively. The height of the building will result in some shading for immediate neighbours at 1035 McClure St. and 1050 Richardson St. (please see the 3D shadowing study for more information). The height of the building is considered a trade-off for setback distances, pushing the building taller, but further away from rear and side setbacks in the buildings with fewer stories.

Overlook and possible privacy implications of immediate neighbours was carefully considered and mitigated through design. On the North Façade, the majority of windows on floor 2-5 are located high in rooms to provide light into the building and limit overlook. There are also no balconies on the rear (north) of the building, with balconies for the rear 1-bedroom units oriented towards parking areas for 1035 McClure St. and the rear of 1050 Richardson St., where there are few window openings. The rooftop terrace is located in the centre of the building to direct eyes on the street and away from neighbours, and occupied areas of this terrace are set back from the roof edge to further mitigate overlook.

INFRASTRUCTURE

There are existing services and sidewalk on the property frontage. A sanitary impact assessment was conducted which indicated that the proposed development would not increase the sanitary load on the City System any more than what could be discharged from the site under the existing zoning.

HERITAGE

Building structures included in this proposal do not have recognized heritage value. The Senior Heritage Planner for the City of Victoria was contacted, and following review, it was determined that the building does not have enough character or value to justify the city pursuing heritage designation.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The proposal acknowledges and integrates key CPTED principals to maintain and increase safety and security. The main entrance is prominent located with direct access to the street, with a second ground floor connected to the street with street access increasing the buildings relationship with the street. 'Eyes on the street' are increased with views from principal living spaces being directed away from neighbouring buildings and towards Richardson Street and open air parking areas on neighbouring sites. Site lighting will be used illuminate pathways and shared areas with ambient light provided to promote safety and visibility of landscaped areas.

GREEN BUILDING FEATURES

The following is a list of green building initiatives that will be deployed within the project:

- Meeting Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code.
- Use of exterior durable materials designed to last the life-span of the building and be easily/readily maintained.
- 100% electric infrastructure, eliminating combustion sources.
- Providing directly metered suites with multiple thermostatically controlled heating zones in each residence.
- Self-generating elevator.
- Solar Panels installed on the roof of the building (above Floor 6)
- Use of LED lighting throughout the project

- Low-VOC paint in all interior areas.
- Low-flow plumbing fixtures used throughout all units.
- Secure bike storage on each floor of the building with electrical outlets for electric bicycle charging.
- Rough in electrical for future electric vehicle charging stations.
- On site rain-boxes for stormwater management.
- Permeable surfacing where appropriate.

PROJECT BENEFITS AND AMENITIES

- This project will bring 20 new units of rental housing stock to the City of Victoria (15 Market Rentals and 5 Affordable Rentals (20% of units)
 - The unit mix provided is specifically designed in response to community feedback collected in the Fairfield Plan development, which suggested more housing in Fairfield targeted to families (3+bedrooms), seniors and working people with low incomes (sec. 9.1.2)."
- The car-share vehicle provided will contribute to an increasing fleet of shared vehicles in Victoria, which will not only be accessible for residents of 1042 Richardson St., but also to members of the community at large. The on-street location with electric charging infrastructure would be the first of its kind for a residential development in the City of Victoria.
- The overt mobility strategy prioritizes the use of bicycles as a prominent lifestyle feature, ensuring bicycle use is convenient and highly accessible.

PROJECT TEAM

We are pleased to be working with a talented project team of professionals local to Victoria, with extensive experience working with the City of Victoria. These include:

- Christine Lintott Architects Inc., Architect
- LADR Landscape Architects, Landscape
- Spot Design Co., Interior Design
- Powell & Associates, Land Surveyors
- McElhanny, Civil Engineer
- Skyline Engineering, Structural Engineer
- Talbot MacKenzie & Associates, Consulting Arborists
- Watt Consulting Group, Parking Study

Thank you for reviewing this proposal to redevelop 1042-1044 Richardson Street. If you have any questions or require further clarification of any part of this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



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