



Wiser

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

July 2024

Attention: Mayor and Council

**RE: Cathedral Hill Master Plan: Application for Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendment for a Comprehensive Development Zone at 911 Quadra Street, 912 Vancouver Street, 930 Burdett Avenue.**

## Proposal Summary

*"Throughout medieval Europe, the crowning glory of any great city was its cathedral. These beautiful edifices were more than places of worship. They were the very heart of the communities, culture and society."*

- Christ Church Cathedral Ottawa

The Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets, with support from Wiser Projects, is pleased to share this application for an amendment to the Official Community Plan and Zoning Regulation Bylaw No. 80-159, on behalf of the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets (the Diocese). This application intends to protect the future of the landmark historic buildings on Cathedral Hill whilst expanding the range of uses, built form, density, and height. As a crucial transitional site between the high-density downtown core and the Fairfield neighbourhood, the proposed plan is broadly policy compliant. The Master Plan focuses on creating a strong but flexible framework to meet future generations needs while providing certainty in the quality and form of delivery to respect cultural, heritage and community goals.

The residential, commercial and amenity opportunities advanced through this rezoning application aim to meet the current and future needs of the Cathedral and Diocese communities, enhance Victoria's cultural and heritage vitality, and further develop Cathedral Hill as a crucial city landmark and community amenity. Most importantly, these new uses will preserve and enhance one of the City's most prominent heritage buildings for future generations. The Diocese is approaching this reality proactively by independently leading this submission without a private sector partner; this approach aims to ensure the plan remains grounded in community need, strategic vision and not short-term financial return.

After decades of re-development proposals and considerations, this proposal seeks to secure this site in perpetuity by a community owner. The residential development opportunities proposed in the Master Plan will increase the housing stock in the region and generate revenue to fund the phased heritage revitalization of the Cathedral, Memorial Hall,

and Yarrow Chapel, as well as much needed local and regional amenities. Recent structural assessments estimate that needed building fabric repairs and seismic upgrades to heritage buildings on the property will cost up to \$50 million.

In consultation with City Planning Staff, it was recommended that this application propose a zoning bylaw amendment for a Comprehensive Development (CD) zone and an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment. This application does not include a concurrent development permit application as the phasing of new construction of the property has not been determined. To better understand the implications of the proposed zone, as well as the existing buildings and open space on site, the application includes *conceptual designs* to illustrate the potential that could result from a full build-out of the site, in compliance with the proposed CD Zone. Separate Development Permit Applications will be made for each quadrant and building development to follow.

For over three years, the Diocese has been engaged in community conversations with internal and external stakeholders; multiple workshops have been held including three specifically with key City staff and departments. This proposed Master Plan is the culmination of these conversations, site due diligence, community and market research with the public, non-profit and private sectors, and Indigenous community members. The Diocese recognizes that Cathedral Hill is in the territory of the ləkʷəŋən people known today as Esquimalt and Songhees Nations and that the site is part of the colonial settlement story of the region. In parallel to the City of Victoria rezoning process, the Diocese has an ongoing dialogue table with Esquimalt and Songhees Nations regarding cultural histories, future relationship building, and place making.

## Proposal Summary

The Cathedral Hill Master Planning process looked both inward and outward: inward, as it has explored how the site can best meet the needs of the Cathedral and Diocese and outward looking as to how Cathedral Hill and its landmark buildings fit into the fabric of the neighbourhood, City and wider region to address changing community need.

Ultimately, it arrived at an approach to rezoning that:

- Balances responsibility and possibility
- Reflects the deep and wide community engagement undertaken in Phase One and Two, due diligence, financial, social, environmental realities and complexities of site, and
- Leads to a holistic Master Plan for the entire site that focuses on sustainability and flexibility, while embodying the philosophy that cities and urban environments are enjoyed and experienced from the street.



*Figure 1: A Master Plan integrated with accessible public realms, cultural and reconciliatory landscapes, and urban forests.*

The Building for the Future project aims to advance three primary project objectives which will be explained further in the relevant sections of this letter.

1. **Reposition Cathedral Hill.** Both within the larger community context by increasing accessibility, relating to the surrounding context in a more sensitive and practical manner, and offering increased value to community through more diverse community supports (housing, community commercial, etc.)
2. **Create development density to expand the social, community and cultural offerings available on site,** while also generating revenue to support the future financial viability, renovation and upkeep of the Diocese, Cathedral, and key heritage buildings in the long-term, and
3. **Retain, celebrate, and enhance Cathedral Hill's existing heritage assets** for community members and visitors alike.

To meet these goals and objectives, the following site plan is being proposed through a phased development process to realize this Master Plan.

1. **Land use:** additional land uses, primarily residential, community commercial, hospitality and uses that are lacking in the current immediate neighbourhood. This includes the following mix of uses:
  - a. Institutional: 20-25%
  - b. Community amenity (in addition to the institutional use): 5-10%
  - c. Commercial: 5-10%
  - d. Residential: 70-75%
2. **Density and Massing:** The overall massing strategy aims to work harmoniously with the existing Cathedral and context. The current zoning allows for 2.0FSR, with current buildings using approximately 0.5FSR. The proposal seeks 2.5FSR with a mix of heights from 6 storeys to a maximum building envelope of up to 30 storeys.



*Figure 2: The Cathedral is an undervalued asset. Reconnection to a vibrant downtown core and heritage, cultural, tourism and residential activation will greatly improve its contribution to the City.*



*Figure 3: Opportunity to demonstrate how a site can achieve community and housing goals while retaining relevance in its physical and community context.*





Figure 4: CGI Imagery of potential density and massing.

3. **Design Framework:** we have created a design framework that focuses designs to be enjoyed by people at street level. Our masterplan creates spaces that are aligned to human scale and holistic accessibility. The design guide will shape the future quality of design, materiality, composition and overall design agenda.
4. **Community Amenities:** preserving, securing and enhancing the mature, diverse community amenities the site currently provides (such as the tree canopy, green and open space, three civic and provincially recognized heritage buildings, and affordable arts community and cultural space) while providing new mid-block publicly accessible greenways for all community use and indoor community amenity spaces.
5. **Phased Development:** as seen below, four quadrants of the site have been delineated to allow for considerate redevelopment based on market conditions and community need and demand. As with all master plans, this density if realized, will occur over many years; meanwhile, this density adds qualitative and quantitative value to the site that supports the Diocese.



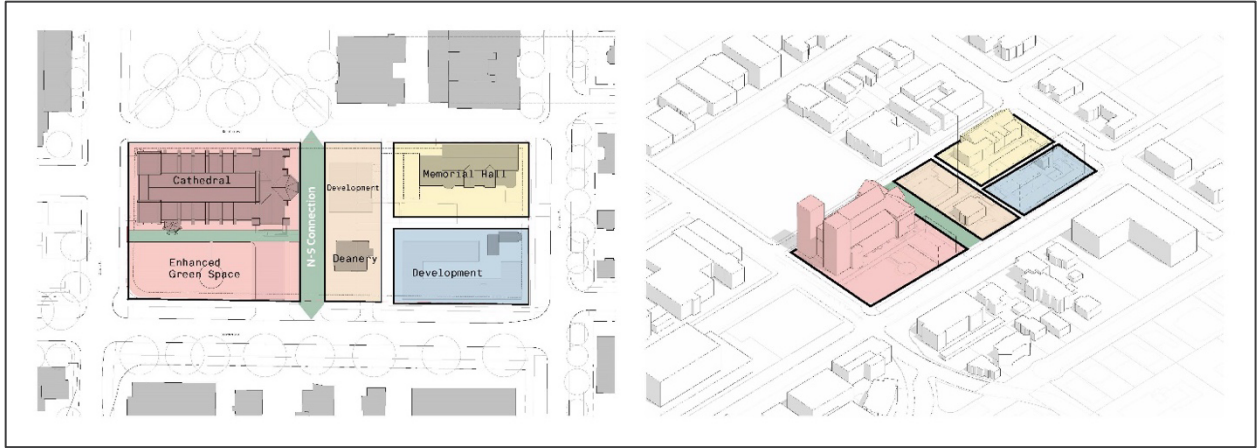


Figure 5: Phased Development

## Conclusion

The Cathedral and Diocese community see this application this once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect and shape the future of one of Victoria's most important urban places. Cathedral Hill is a crucial cultural, community and heritage asset that sits as a significant feature of the City's landscape. The Master Plan aims to secure additional land uses that celebrate and protect Cathedral Hill's heritage and increase the vitality and accessibility of Cathedral Hill to the direct and larger community.



Figure 6: Material continuity and geometric unity to create a composed sense of place that meets community needs for the next Century.

## Project History

Planning for the future of Cathedral Hill has been an ongoing conversation within the Diocese for over a decade. In 2021, the Diocese engaged Wiser Projects and FaulknerBrowns Architects to begin a focused engagement and planning exercise which came to be known as Building for the Future (BFTF).

Building for the Future is a three-phased process that will culminate in the implementation of a long-term Master Plan for Cathedral Hill. Leadership and guidance for this process is provided by the Building for the Future Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the three principal stakeholders on Cathedral Hill: the Christ Church Cathedral, the Christ Church Cathedral Education Society, and the Anglican Diocese of Islands and Inlets.

## Proposal Rationale

To secure the ongoing vitality of Cathedral Hill and to enable the stakeholders to maintain cultural relevance, advancement of the second primary project objective of the proposal is key to realize development value and provide much needed funds for investment in existing building upgrades, expansion, and public realm improvements. This reality is not unique to Cathedral Hill, as public funding, donations, bequests, volunteerism, and faith-based engagement has been on the decline in Canada for decades. The Diocese is approaching this reality proactively by independently leading this submission without a private sector partner; this approach aims to ensure the plan remains grounded in community needs.

The Christ Church Cathedral is uniquely situated in a park-like setting on the Hill, which strongly dictates and directs where density and new building is possible. Cathedral Hill's adjacency to the Downtown Core with densities up to 5.5 FSR means it is a key transitional site into the Fairfield neighbourhood. The proposed development composition and density balances this through buildings of approximately six storeys with taller development up to 90 metres or 30 storeys in specific locations depending on eventual siting and massing decisions. The aim is to enhance Cathedral Hill through high quality architecture and landscape design, respecting heritage and delivering needed multi-unit residential housing.

## Site Location and Context

The subject site is within the boundaries of the Fairfield neighbourhood, but on the northern side of Quadra Street, directly adjacent to the downtown core neighbourhood.

The 1.4-hectare single-title site encompasses an entire city block bounded by Quadra Street to the west, Vancouver Street to the east, Burdett Avenue to the south, and Rockland Avenue to the north.

The 94-year-old Christ Church Cathedral is the focal building on the Hill. The other major structure on site is the Memorial Hall, currently home to the Christ Church Cathedral School. Several other smaller heritage and non-heritage buildings that support community activities are also located on the lot.





Figure 7: Aerial view of Cathedral Hill looking northwest towards downtown.



Figure 8: Aerial view of Cathedral Hill and Pioneer Square.



Christ Church Cathedral is uniquely situated both at the eastern end of Courtney Street, and in a unique, park-like context. A contiguous green area, consisting of Cathedral Commons (~0.11 ha) and Pioneer Square (~0.83 ha), straddles Rockland Avenue. Cathedral Commons is a site the Diocese has committed to as a reconciliatory space through ongoing dialogue with Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

## **Proposed Land Use and Zoning Changes**

The OCP currently has two designations for the site: Urban Residential and Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space.

The current Zoning Regulation Bylaw identifies the subject site as CHP-PB Zone – Cathedral Hill Precinct (Public Buildings) District and it allows public buildings and limited commercial uses with a maximum floor space ratio of 2.0 and height of 22.5 metres. This application proposes to rezone to CHP-Comp Zone – Cathedral Hill Precinct (Comprehensive) District to allow a range of uses including residential with a maximum density of 2.5 FSR and height of 90 metres. The intent of this designation is for a mix of low-mid-, and high-rise multi-unit, mixed-use, and large floor plate commercial and institutional buildings, which aligns with the proposed rezoning application.

The proposal is founded on the philosophy that cities and urban environments are enjoyed and experienced from the street; this has also been informed by ongoing discussions with City of Victoria staff. Considerable effort has been taken to define a contextually appropriate response to street scale by delivering building elevations and footprints that are similar in scale to those found in the neighbourhood. With the appropriate plan and scale, the proposal can harmoniously deliver density and building height without having an adverse effect on urban grain or street experience. This coupled with a mature landscape strategy that protects existing and increases the strong canopy of street trees means that building height is a less critical factor when assessing street experience.

The development framework has identified two locations where building height steps up beyond six storeys; these locations are directly to the east of the Cathedral and in the southeastern corner adjacent to the Yarrow Chapel. The design brief details the iterative process the project undertook, alongside City staff, to site density most appropriately.

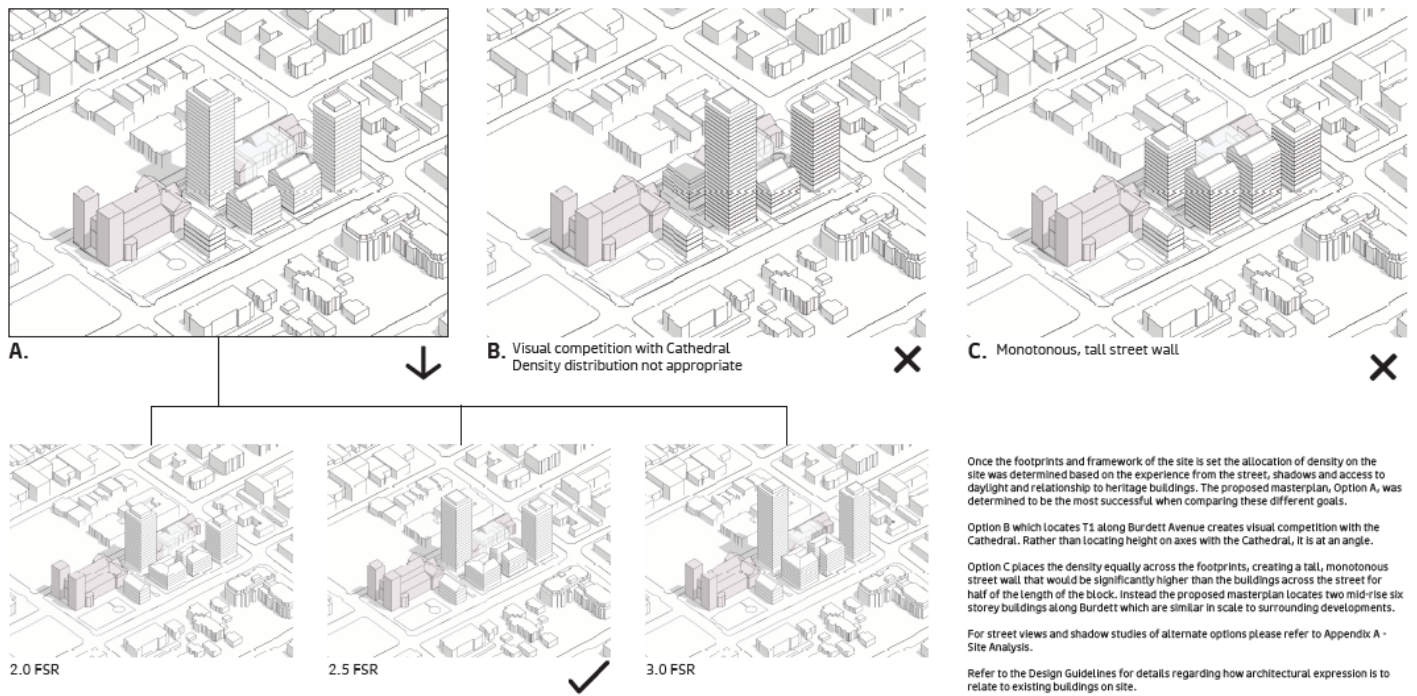


Figure 9: Siting density exercise

## Policy Context

The application does not conform to the current City of Victoria Official Community Plan or the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan but reflects conversations with community, users and tenants, and City staff; it also respects that there is a strategic OCP review underway that may be considering the need to add residential uses to many or all faith-based institutional zones.

The OCP currently has two designations for the subject site: Urban Residential and Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space (See Figure 4). Urban Residential allows primarily residential uses in the form of three-six storey, low- and mid-rise multi-unit buildings and a base density of 1.2 FSR to a maximum additional density of 2.0 FSR. Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space allows public and landmark buildings and a density of 0.5 FSR with up to 2.5 FSR for residential non-market housing. The OCP already recognizes that 2.5 FSR for residential is acceptable in this location.

The figure below shows that properties to the north and west of the subject site are designated Core Residential, which aligns better with this rezoning application. Therefore, this application proposes redesignating the entire site to allow residential, mixed-use, commercial and institutional uses with a base density of 2.5 FSR and a maximum height envelope of 30 storeys or 90 meters. The intent of this designation is to allow for a mix of low-mid-, and high-rise multi-unit, mixed-use, and large floor plate commercial and institutional buildings, which aligns with the proposed rezoning application.



Figure 10: OCP Map 2: Place Designation (clip).

The subject site is located in the Fairfield Neighbourhood bordering the downtown core. When the Downtown Core Area Plan was updated in 2022, a portion of the Northwest Area as identified in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, adjacent to the subject site, was included in the updated Plan and designated as Residential Mixed-Use District. Policies in the Residential Mixed-Use District direct the “development of new zoning that includes density levels to accommodate mid-rise to high-rise residential, commercial or office development” (p. 34). This policy direction should be extended to the subject site.

The Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan shows the future land use of the subject site as “Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space” (p. 41), but provides no development direction. Properties to the north and south of the subject site allow a base density of 1.2 FSR and additional density up to 2.5 FSR with a maximum height of 20 metres and 6 storeys. Properties to the northwest of the subject site allow a base density of 2.0 FSR and additional density up to 5.0 FSR with a maximum height of 37.5 metres and 12 storeys. Policies in the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan align more with this proposed rezoning application with respect to a density of 2.5 FSR.

In the Downtown Core Area Plan, there are multiple properties within 300 metres of the subject site that allow a range of densities and heights. The highest density is within the A-1 category which allows a mixed-use FSR of between 4.0 and 6.0 FSR where the residential FSR may not exceed 3.0 FSR. Within the A-1 area, the maximum building height is 90 metres and 30 storeys. Policies in the Downtown Core Area Plan align more with this proposed rezoning application with respect to a height being sought while the FSR being requested is less than half of that the downtown area permits.

This proposal has been shaped with reference to existing policy guidance, including the OCP, Downtown Core Plan, Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, General Urban Design Guidelines, Development Permit Area 14 Guidelines, and the Zoning Bylaw (CHP-PB and C3 Zones). Additionally, project stakeholders worked to balance density with an appropriate composition. As with all master plans, this density if realized, will occur over a multi-decade time scale; meanwhile, this density adds qualitative and quantitative value to the site that supports the Diocese in the vision both philosophically and practically.

## Project Benefits and Amenities

Historically, Cathedral Hill and the Diocese have addressed community need through wide and diverse ministries, including but not limited to:

- Resonate worshiping community active in civic life, support of other charities and social servicing organizations



- Internal and external arts and cultural events, offerings, rentals and partnerships
- The independent educational programs offered through the non-profit Christ Church Cathedral School Educational Society
- Long-standing relationship with the Centre for Studies in Religious and Society at the University Victoria,
- Immigrant and refugee program and services
- Seven non-profit owned and operated affordable housing on various sites across the Diocese including in the City of Victoria and Saanich, and
- Partnerships with other faith-based and secular spiritual organizations to share space and co-locate on Cathedral Hill and other Diocese sites.

This proposal will allow for these continued ministries, new opportunities, and the long-term protection and enhancement of the Cathedral as a civic amenity within an ever-changing local and regional context. Under the development framework proposed in this application, the following are some of the civic benefits to be secured and realized:

- Renovations to the interior of the Christ Church Cathedral to make it more accessible and reconfigure it to better serve as an arts and culture venue and multi-purpose space.
- Seismic upgrades to three heritage designated properties to ensure they continue to stand for generations as exemplars of the city's development; schematic design level cost estimates are appended to this application to demonstrate the financial and resource requirements for these works, upwards of \$28 million for the Cathedral building alone.
- Construction of a dedicated amenity building, Cathedral House, that will provide new Cathedral and Diocese offices, supportive spaces (e.g. commercial kitchen) and be available for use by other community groups and partnerships.
- New secured publicly accessible north-south and east-west green connectors (Cathedral Walk and Memorial Mews) and corridors across the site, including stronger connections to the existing Pioneer Square and the South Lawn.
- Setting the stage for a pedestrian-first plaza-style treatment of Quadra Street, Cathedral Court, to create a clear sense of place and establish the Cathedral as a true community space.
- Helping address the city's ongoing housing crisis and City of Victoria's housing targets and provincial requirements through the addition of significant of new residential units.

## Community Engagement

Engagement within the church community, stakeholders that use the site, and the broader community has been at the heart of the Building for the Future (BTF) process for over two years; in fact, over 5 years ago, the Cathedral undertook a Greater Works Consultation to set the stage for the larger Master Plan process. Information about stakeholder and community engagement during earlier phases of the BTF process is available Christ Church Cathedral

Precinct: Building for the Future Phase One Report (March 2022) and in Appendix C: Stakeholder Engagement. The development framework presented in this application reflects what was heard during those early engagement phases and shows public need for this proposal.

As potential site designs emerged, the BFTF team shared more information with interested parties across a range of venues and channels. The formal pre-application engagement specifically included:

- Project introductions with the boards of the Fairfield-Gonzales Community Association and Downtown Residents Association
- A pre-application meeting with the Fairfield Gonzales Community Association Land Use Committee
- Two open houses at the Cathedral for both congregants and interested community members
- Two online sessions for interested community members; and
- A design workshop with City staff and representatives of neighbourhood landowners with major development proposals underway.

Invitations to the above events were sent via e-mail to organizations and individuals identified in early engagement phases and the feedback received will help inform site design decisions ahead of submitting a formal rezoning application to the City of Victoria in December.

Regular updates about the Master Plan project are posted to the Christ Church Cathedral's Building for the Future website [here](#) and include ongoing feedback and how it was considered and addressed.

## Indigenous Reconciliation

The Cathedral leadership has been working to build a relationship with Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations through programming, invitations to participate in services and events, and most recently, working toward a mutual understanding regarding the redevelopment of the Cathedral Commons located at the southwest lawn. These conversations started in 2018 and include re-dedicating the space in a respectful way as *sxw̱enx̱w̱əŋ təṉəx̱w̱* (the family group who have ancestral connections to this area), and a site of reconciliation for the whole community. The BFTF team is engaging with Songhees and Esquimalt representatives to continue this dialogue through an ongoing scheduled roundtable about this and other reconciliatory activities.

Information about the Diocese's commitment to reconciliation is available [here](#).

## Community Need and Demand

In an urban location constrained for space and in a market in need of more housing, the solution is higher density on inner-city sites with access to amenities. The current OCP land use designations (Urban Residential and Public Facilities, Institutions, Parks and Open Space) and zone do not allow the range of uses, density or heights necessary to meet the needs of residents or achieve the vision for Cathedral Hill.

The current zone for Cathedral Hill allows public buildings, churches, community recreational facilities, theatres, and accessory uses/buildings to these uses. This proposed rezoning

application aims to keep the existing church and cultural uses but add residential and a range of uses to provide much-needed housing and activate ground-floor commercial spaces to contribute to a vibrant community.

To accommodate this proposed rezoning application the following range of uses would provide flexibility for the future:

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • Assisted Living Facility           | • Home Occupation                          |
| • Brew Pub (beer, spirits, wine)     | • Hotel                                    |
| • Care Facility                      | • Office - community                       |
| • Church / Assembly                  | • Personal Service                         |
| • Civic Facility                     | • Public Building                          |
| • Club (social or recreational club) | • Residential                              |
| • Cultural Facility                  | • Residential Lock-off Unit                |
| • Drinking Establishment             | • Retail Liquor Sale                       |
| • Dwelling Unit                      | • Retail Trade                             |
| • Equipment Rental                   | • Small-Scale Commercial Urban Agriculture |
| • Financial Service                  | • Studio                                   |
| • Food and Beverage Service          | • Utility                                  |

## Neighbourhood and Impact

The 1.4-hectare single-title site contains several iconic and historic buildings and spaces which serve a variety of spiritual and social functions for the Anglican community as well as other cultural and arts groups from across the neighbourhood, city, and region. The Christ Church Cathedral is an iconic centrepiece for the neighbourhood. Retaining these historic assets while adding residential and commercial uses would be a complement to the neighbourhood.

### Project Objective #1: Reposition Cathedral Hill

The proposed development framework provides a foundation to make existing spaces more accessible and create more opportunities to deliver community value. The Master Planning process began with a needs assessment among Cathedral users. Two themes emerged: first, a need to upgrade the building's interior spaces so they can be used for a wider range of purposes and by a wider cross-section of the community. Second, a desire to make the Cathedral building more attractive and more accessible in its context.

Looking to precedent in other cities and working with the City of Victoria and significant neighbours, a concept was developed to deliver a new shared democratic public space that will become the 'civic' front door to the Cathedral. At a finer grain, landscape and public realm strategies are being explored that expand on the exiting mature landscape and invite their enjoyment by adding north-south and east-west pedestrian routes through the site.



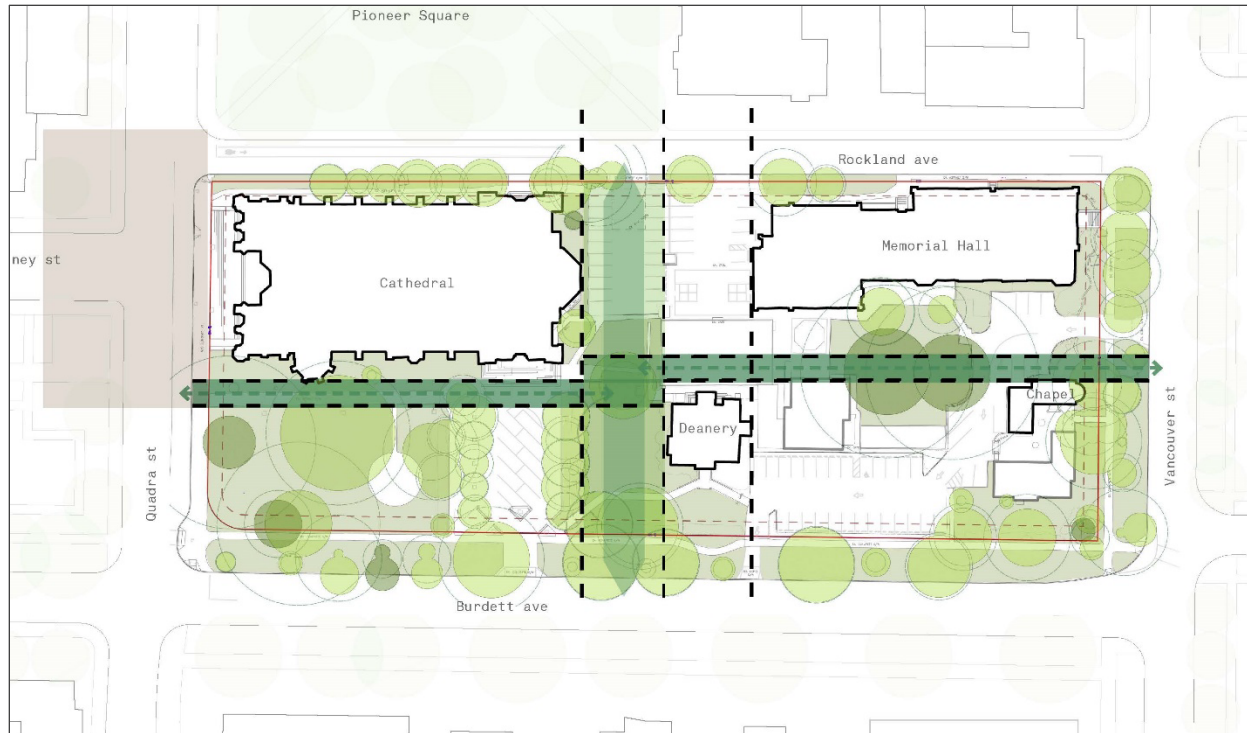


Figure 11: Cathedral Hill proposed pedestrian corridors

The strategy for public space and landscape interventions on Cathedral Hill prioritize maintaining the Cathedral's compositional prominence. This ensures that the Cathedral will retain its position as a standalone building within a green park environment. The development plan for the eastern half of Cathedral Hill deliberately shares scale similarities with neighbours, creating visual continuity and a shared street scale. This strategy aims to build a symbiotic relationship with neighbours, ensuring that any new development contributes positively to the human-scale street environments found in the area.

### **Project Objective #2: Create development density to expand the social, community and cultural offerings on site.**

This objective underscores the need to revenue to support the future financial viability, renovation and upkeep of the Diocese, Cathedral, and key heritage buildings in the long-term. This will be achieved through phased development, as negotiated through a master development agreement (MDA) with the City throughout the rezoning process. To considerably introduce development, while understanding flexibility is needed to respond to market conditions and community need and demand, the following phasing framework is proposed.

The site has been delineated into four discrete parcels, each integral to the transformation of the city block while striking a judicious equilibrium between historical conservation and contemporary functionality. Parcel 1, earmarked for the Cathedral House amenity building, operates independently, impervious to concurrent infrastructure work on other parcels. This preliminary phase prioritizes the preservation of the Cathedral's architectural legacy.

Parcel 2, situated in the southeast quadrant, assumes prominence for primarily residential development, with a parkade below. This phase introduces modern living while upholding a commitment to green spaces, augmenting the overall urban experience. Progressing to Parcels 3, 4, and 5 necessitates exacting coordination, particularly concerning below-grade parking facilities. Parcel 3's development is intricately planned to preclude disruption to the ongoing operations of Memorial Hall School, underscoring the preservation of educational spaces amid urban evolution.

The strategic expansion of Memorial Hall on Parcel 4, likely mandating the temporary relocation of certain operations to Parcel 5 during construction, marks a pivotal phase. Parcel 5, envisioned as the conclusive development parcel, denotes the denouement of this transformative initiative. The tactical division into five parcels, with nuanced consideration for the below-grade parking structures beneath Parcels 2, 3, and 5, provides phasing flexibility and facilitates a sophisticated approach to construction and community integration. This well-conceived plan ensures Cathedral Hill's seamless evolution, embodying the city's commitment to preserving its historical tapestry while navigating the imperatives of a dynamic future. Cathedral Hill stands as a testament to meticulous and adaptable development, where historical resonance converges with contemporary urban functionality, forming a crucial component of a rezoning application.

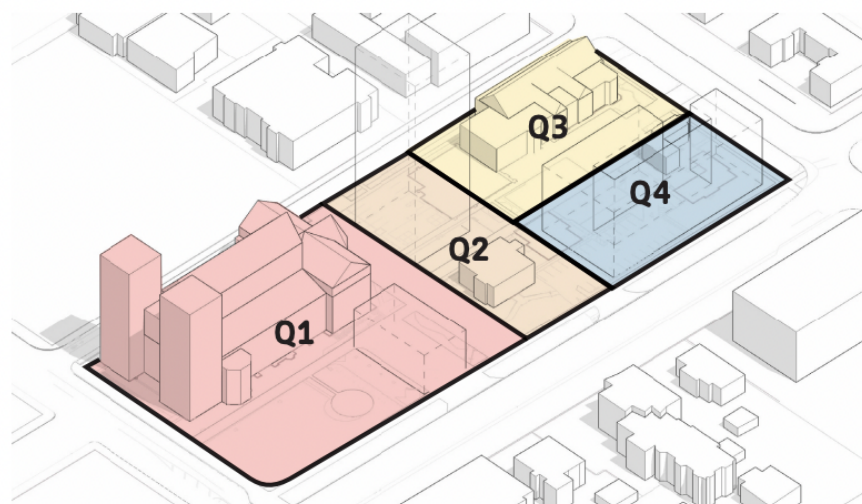


Figure 12: Proposed Development Zones

### Project Objective #3: Retain, celebrate and enhance Cathedral Hill's heritage

The proposed development framework works with the existing heritage assets to celebrate their presence and to deploy them as noteworthy features defining the identity of the re-development. The Cathedral's position as the primary physical onsite feature is paramount and its geometry has shaped site planning.

The proposed development frameworks four quadrants are each discussed in further detail below.

1. The Cathedral and South Lawn (Pink)
2. The Southeast Quarter, including Yarrow Chapel (Blue)
3. Memorial Hall, including the School (Yellow)
4. The Central Mall, including the Deanery (Orange)

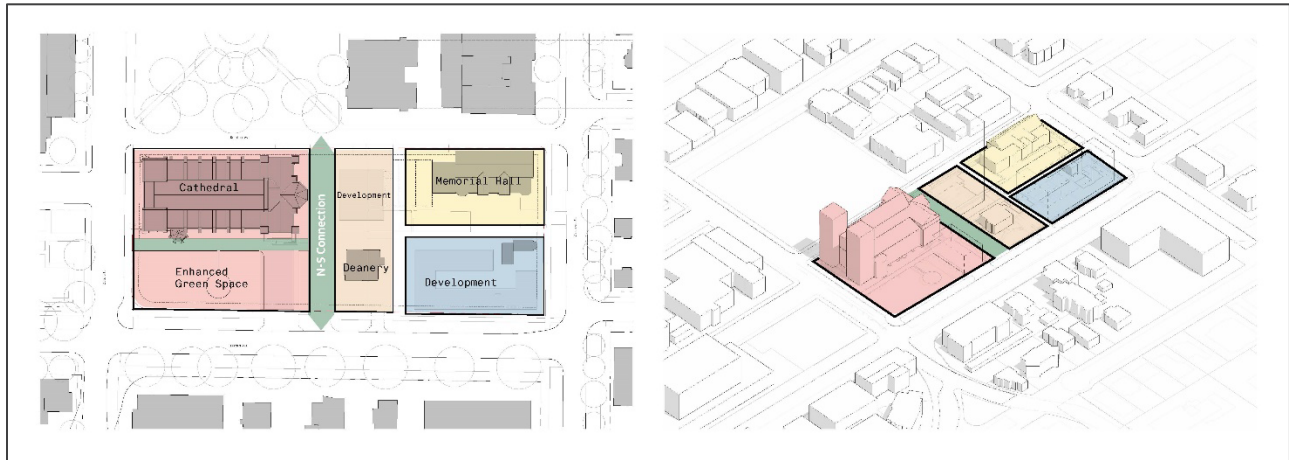


Figure 13: Cathedral Hill development framework

### The Cathedral and South Lawn

The proposal aims to create opportunity for the Cathedral to be more accessible in context and have a stronger relationship between Pioneer Square to the north and the park-like south lawn. The Cathedral is the focus and the proposed Cathedral House amenity building south of the Cathedral's east end will be developed as an appropriately scaled, compositionally appropriate addition. This space will provide much needed modern community and operational facilities to the Cathedral Diocese and partners.

### The Southeast Quarter

The southeast quarter has been identified as an early phase of re-development that seeks to deliver best value to stakeholders and community by generating income and providing high-quality urban housing for the community. Working within the intent of the Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan, 2019 and the Cathedral Hill Precinct Development Permit Area 14, the aim is to realise Cathedral Hill's identified capacity for growth by delivering multi-unit residential development at a medium-to-high density. These units will animate the streetscape with front doors, cultural, and commercial uses. The proposal specifically works with similar development footprints to the immediate neighbours, thereby retaining street scale and urban experience, while using sensitive building forms to deliver needed density.

### Memorial Hall and School

Memorial Hall is a distinct Gothic revival facade that currently serves as a K-8 school. While the building is important to the character of the area, its internal structure is inadequate for modern educational purposes. The proposal will consolidate the school on to a smaller site footprint, while providing the opportunity for 50 percent floor area expansion by area in a multi-storey form. This strategy would retain the elevational character of the building while enabling its modernisation to deliver education in a contemporary fit-for-purpose environment. To deliver this strategy, the newer extensions to Memorial Hall, such as the existing school gymnasium, will be removed and replaced.



### The Central Mall including the Deanery

The Deanery is an unusual building and is distinct in large part due to its situational relationship to the Cathedral. The scale of the house and its format limit its usefulness today. Historically, the Diocese has utilized the building in various ways, as housing but also as a bookstore, offices, and meetings spaces. Without significant renovations the building will have less relevance and become less useful over years to come. The development framework respects the compositional situation of the Deanery and delivers a redevelopment strategy that could retain or relocate the Deanery building. The Diocese is committed to rehousing the Deanery, should it be relocated, on a more appropriate heritage site within their portfolio. This strategy enables the stakeholders to consider their evolving needs and balance it with heritage impact at the most appropriate moment. Relocation of the Deanery may deliver a better development opportunity in that required density can be delivered in buildings that have fewer storeys.

Behind the Deanery and on the east-west axis of the Cathedral nave, we have identified a location that could deliver high-density development at the heart of Cathedral Hill. Working with the Cathedral's powerful east-west geometry it is possible to consider placing a tall slender residential building that compliments the composition of the Cathedral and accommodates necessary development area. The scale of this building will provide the opportunity to deliver a much-needed financial boost to help fund the proposed public realm and building upgrades.

## Design Framework

This application has been prepared in keeping with the intent of the OCP guidelines for Development Permit Area 14: Cathedral Hill Precinct. At this time, the application does not seek a concurrent development permit, as the phasing of new construction of the property has not been decided. However, this application proposes a framework to begin the collaborative design guidelines process with City staff, as discussed at the various charettes held with the City over the last two years. This approach will assist in ensuring that any future development is consistent with the materiality and context of this crucial City space.

The development framework sets out an approach to building footprint, landscape structure, and defines site circulation, transportation strategies and vehicular access for servicing. The strategy has a 'pedestrian first' approach while making significant moves to enhance the functionality and accessibility of the whole site.

Looking to precedent in other cities and working with the City of Victoria and neighbours, we have developed a concept to deliver new shared democratic public space that will become the 'civic' front door to the Cathedral. At a finer grain, the proposed landscape and public realm strategies that expand on the existing mature landscape and invite the community to enjoy the environment by adding north south and east west pedestrian routes through the site.

The urban design plan for the site achieves the objectives of the vision through the application of the following guiding principles:

1. **Celebrating the Cathedral:** site hierarchy and geometry set out by heritage assets,

2. **Open Space and Contextual Integration:** creating pedestrian first connections and human scale building footprints.
3. **Locating Density:** distributing density so it enhances the Cathedral's position in the City rather than compete with it.

Recognizing the need for density while negotiating the site constraints including the protection of heritage assets, urban forest and landscape, bedrock and parking, the resulting urban design plan results in the site division into four quadrants that provide flexibility and allow for phased development.

### Density Distribution on Site

Through iterative site planning influenced by due diligence, city staff and the community, two key areas for density have been identified. The following diagrams illustrate the guiding principles to locate density on this historic site.

1. Primary tall building to be located on axis behind the cathedral, to enhance its presence in the context.

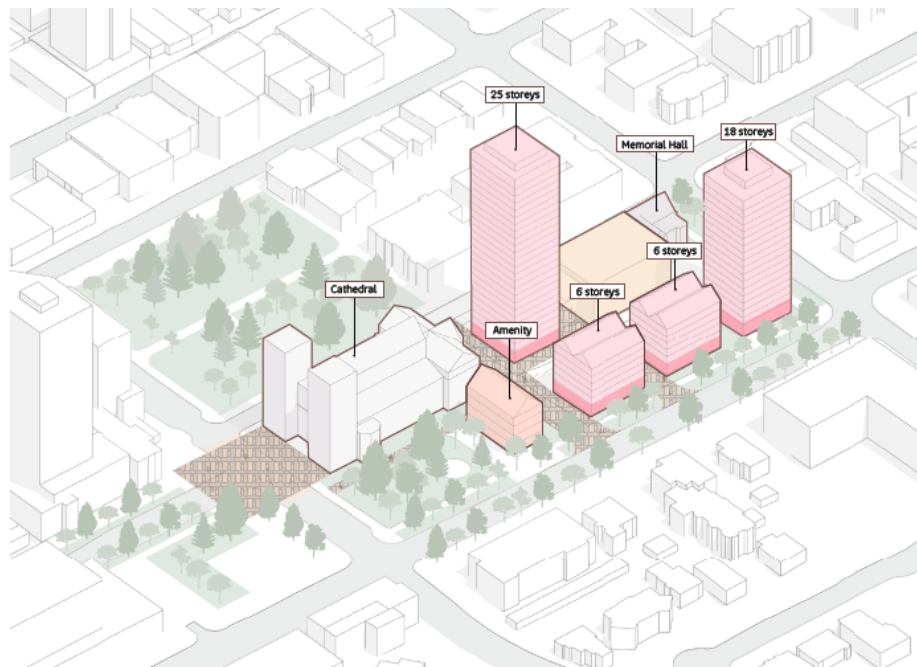


Figure 14: Density Distribution on Site

2. Medium density to be located along the South.
3. Additional density to be located on the southeast the corner, at Vancouver St and Burdett Avenue.
4. Locating the towers in the two corners provides the greatest distance between them, a key priority for livability to secure in the plan, as well as to provide flexibility for future development options.

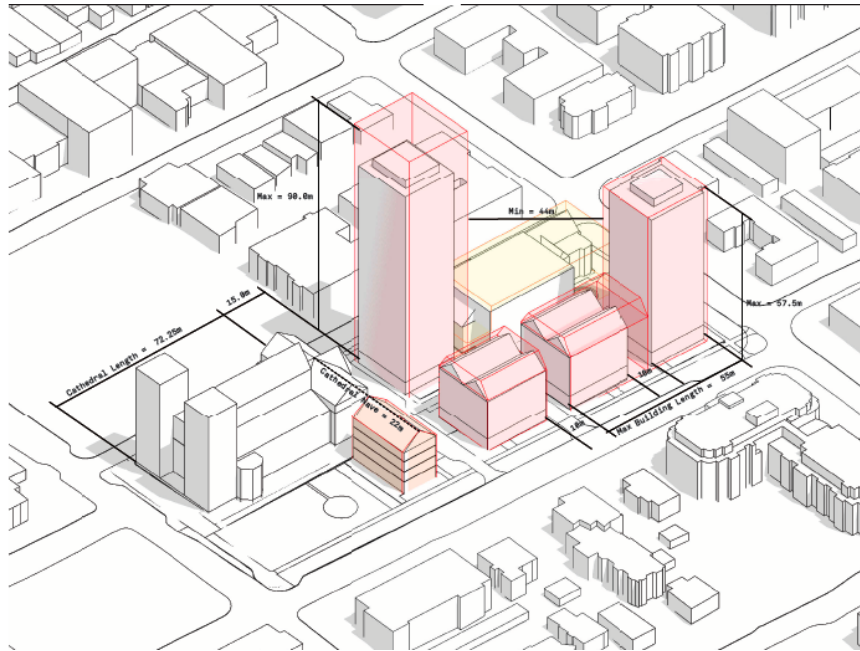


Figure 15: Maximum buildable envelope demonstration

### Framework

Overlaying the principles of hierarchy, open space and fabric and locating density creates an overall framework that allows for additional density on site while providing porosity, flexibility, celebrating heritage and making a livable community with access to sunlight. The proposed design framework is as follows:

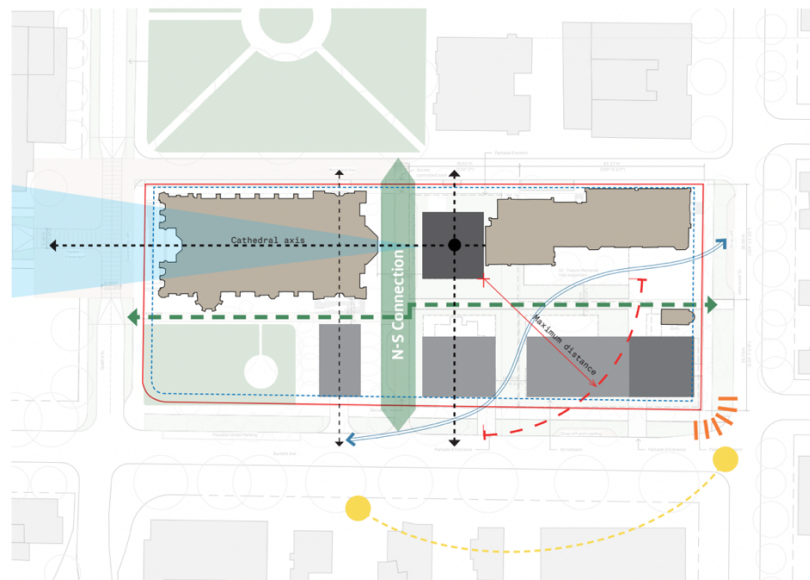


Figure 16: Design Framework

## Community Safety

The proposal seeks to address the significant increase in community safety concerns around Cathedral Hill; this was one of the top concerns communicated during engagement with current site visitors and users, and the adjacent development community. The project team has worked collaboratively with the City to undertake a CPTED analysis that informed the landscape and design suggestions included in this application. However, the lack of diverse activity throughout all hours is known to be one of the larger contributors to the unsafe activities and users on and adjacent to the site. Welcoming new uses, such as permanent housing and commercial, along with new active transportation corridors and improved soft and hard landscape features will bring new light and activity to the site, putting “eyes on the street” to support community safety, inclusion and well-being.

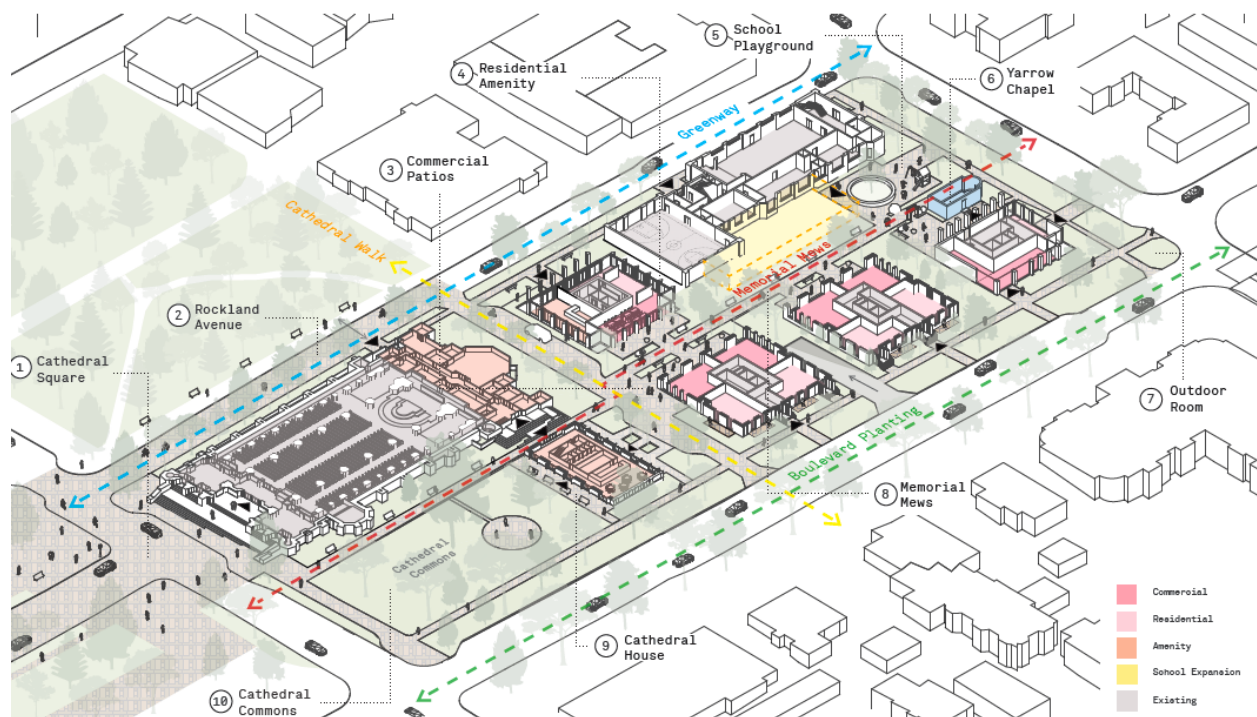


Figure 17: Ground plane activation through diversity of uses and public realm and open spaces

## Transportation

The Diocese retained Watt Consulting Group to provide transportation, circulation and parking recommendations in respect of the additional residential units, commercial uses, and public realm improvements proposed for the subject site.

All transportation plans for this initiative will seek to advance City of Victoria policies that encourage sustainable transportation, lower parking requirements, and creating more housing options in proximity to frequent transit. Cathedral Hill is located in an area conducive to sustainable transportation and increased housing supply.

Cathedral Hill has a walk score of 95, indicating that daily errands do not require a vehicle, and it has immediate access to the Vancouver Street all-ages and abilities (AAA) bike facility.



The site is also within short distance of the Fort Street AAA bike facility that connects to downtown Victoria and the wider AAA bike network. Lastly, the site is in proximity to the Humboldt Street and Richardson Street AAA cycling facilities, which provide east-west connectivity to downtown Victoria, the Fairfield neighbourhood, and Oak Bay.

The project proponents are attuned to current concerns about traffic in Cathedral Hill area, in particular traffic and parking issues generated by the drop-off and pick-up of children attending the elementary school on site. Mitigating these concerns will be a focus of transportation plans for the proposal going forward, as well as coordinating with staff on the Parking Guideline review currently underway.

A charette held with adjacent neighbours and City staff in the summer of 2023 focusing on upcoming redevelopment plans in Cathedral Hill neighbourhood, a consensus vision emerged for a pedestrian-first design philosophy for the area that could include:

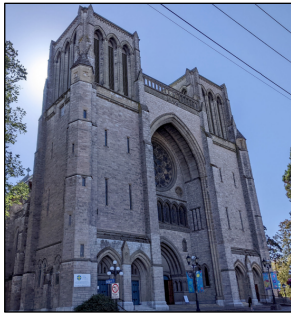
- A car-free zone along part of Courtenay Street
- A shared and flex-use streetscape on Quadra Street to serve as a forecourt to the Cathedral
- A narrowed Quadra Street from Broughton Street to Burdett Street that will serve as a transit corridor to bring people right to the Cathedral's front door, aligned with the future Quadra Street corridor planning, and
- An improved cycling connection between Rockland Avenue and Courtenay Street.

Through the Traffic Impact Assessment and Traffic Demand Management work undertaken, the site proposes underground secured vehicular and bicycle parking (approximately 200 stalls for vehicles and 411 long-term bicycle stalls) alongside diverse street-level secure pedestrian, cycling, and maintenance vehicle and accessibility parking. As a pedestrian-first lens is a core objective of this project, working with staff to iteratively project and adapt to changing community needs related to vehicle, cycling and pedestrian access will continue through application review but also each development phases.

## Heritage

### Heritage Status

Three buildings within Cathedral Hill are designated heritage buildings: the Cathedral, Yarrow Chapel, and Memorial Hall. Despite previous assumptions, a fourth building on the site, the Deanery does not have heritage status, although it is included on the City of Victoria's heritage registry. The buildings have heritage significance for their aesthetic value, historical/ cultural value, social value, and spiritual value. Statements of Significance were written for these four buildings in 2007 and all were added to the Canadian Register of Historic Places in 2010. The original statements have recently been updated and amended by Cummer Heritage Consulting, which has been retained for this project. These Statements, particularly their lists of Character Defining Elements (CDEs), will be used to guide all proposed work on these buildings to ensure their heritage value is maintained and enhanced.



Christ Church  
Cathedral



Yarrow Chapel



Memorial Hall



The Deanery

*Figure 18: Images of buildings on the site*

## Site History

Today's Christ Church Cathedral is situated on the land of the traditional territory of the Coast Salish and Lekwungen speaking people, specifically the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations. A recent report on the history of the Cathedral noted that "Church Hill" was formerly covered in Oak trees, suggesting kwetlal (camas), a native flower and important Indigenous food staple, may have grown in the area. The hill overlooked xwszyq'əm (whu-SEI-kum, "place of mud"), known to settlers as James Bay, which contained valuable clam beds. People camped near here when they were gathering kwetlal roots at Beacon Hill. Hunting grounds and a portage route to Ross Bay were accessed via the head of the bay.

The beginning of Christ Church Cathedral is closely connected to the Hudson's Bay Company and the founding of the colony of British Columbia. There were two earlier iterations of the Church prior to this current version. One built in 1860, which burnt down in 1869, and a second built in 1872, which was used until the stone cathedral was completed in 1929. There was a desire for a stone cathedral for decades prior to its construction, however, budgetary constraints delayed this becoming a reality and resulted in the third iteration being the "Unfinished Cathedral" that it is today.

In 1891, a competition was held to determine the design of the new stone cathedral. Architect J.C. M. (John Charles Malcom) Keith won the competition but would not get to see his design built for nearly forty years, due to funding issues and the interruptions caused by two World Wars and the Great Depression.

As the Diocese of today confronts how best to fund the maintenance and use of the Cathedral for the coming decades, it is worth noting that historical records show that throughout the 20th century there were ongoing challenges with raising the necessary funds to maintain Cathedral Hill and discussion within the church community about the best course of action for the site.

## Conservation and Revitalization Plans

Today, work is proposed to conserve the designated heritage buildings and extend their physical life, while simultaneously revitalizing the site through new development in strategic locations to provide much-needed revenue that will fund and support the on-going work and expense of maintaining these heritage buildings in perpetuity. As part of the revitalization of Cathedral Hill, the heritage buildings will be preserved, restored, and rehabilitated, using

each asset's Character Defining Elements (CDEs) as a guide. The proposed changes to Cathedral Hill do not affect the Heritage Values nor the CDEs of these historic places. Heritage Conservation Plans are being researched and written for each of these heritage buildings as part of this rezoning application, which will provide greater detail on the proposed conservation work. RJC Engineers has been engaged to provide seismic and structural upgrade plans for the heritage buildings, work that is currently underway.

## Infrastructure

### Utilities and Infrastructure

The Diocese has retained Herold Engineering to provide civil engineering expertise for the project. Herold reviewed the existing sanitary sewer, storm drain and water infrastructure in the neighbourhood and proposed site service locations for the ultimate build-out of the Cathedral District site. Discussions with the Supervisor of Land Development in the Engineering and Public Works department at the City of Victoria have been favourable to the proposed servicing design for the site.

Sanitary sewer, storm drain and water services are proposed to be located on both Rockland Avenue and Burdett Avenue. The sanitary sewer and storm drain mains on both Burdett and Rockland have been lined in recent years and no capacity issues are anticipated in those mains. It has also been confirmed that the existing water mains on Quadra Street and Vancouver Street will be replaced under the City of Victoria's long-term plans.

Herold Engineering suggests servicing each proposed building with individual sanitary sewer, storm drain and water (fire and domestic) services. During this process, a sanitary attenuation study will be completed early in the development process, as well as calculations to meet the Fire Underwriters requirements. As Herold Engineering moves through detailed civil design, depths of the existing sanitary and storm drain mains will be confirmed and individual service depths will be determined for the various development sites.

Herold Engineering does not anticipate that any main extensions will be required to service the various building sites, but if extensions are required it would be at the cost of the project.

### Landscape Design and Tree Retention

The proposed landscape design approach will celebrate the significant heritage qualities of the Cathedral through a thoughtful and engaging public realm that complements the beloved community landmark. The landscape intent will be to strengthen physical and visual connections in the area while introducing a clear identity for Cathedral Hill. Existing and proposed edges of surrounding properties will seek to increase public activation with the introduction of added public space at critical corners. Under City of Victoria plans, Courtney Street may be converted into a narrowed pedestrian-oriented street allowing for formal and informal events for community use, while Quadra Street will be designed with a uniform material treatment to operate as a more pedestrian-focused shared zone creating a welcoming space for visitors to gather at the Cathedral's entry.

The Rockland Greenway corridor will continue along the shared plaza with room for temporary stalls/installations made available for pop-up events. Throughout the Church's courtyards, permeability will be accentuated through the design of several green connections that will extend the surrounding existing green corridors of the local neighborhood.

Designing with native flora will be the primary focus as a planting strategy helping to support the local biodiversity and increase the urban canopy to help advance the City of Victoria Forest Masterplan. Through the thoughtful combination of the listed design approaches, Cathedral Hill can become a highly active community hub, offering multiple opportunities to engage and interact for all users and visitors of the space.

Part of the project team includes Gye + Associates certified arborists who have been engaged to undertake the assessment of the existing tree cover and tree condition within the site. Protecting, enhancing and increasing the urban forest is a priority of this project, understanding the benefits they provide are multi-faceted and increasingly important as other neighbourhood density is realized.



Figure 19: Proposed urban forest canopy and open space plan

## Conclusion

The Cathedral and Diocese community look forward to this once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect and shape the future of one of Victoria's most important urban places. Cathedral Hill is a crucial cultural, community and heritage asset that sits as a significant feature of the City's landscape. The Master Plan aims to secure additional land uses that celebrate and protect Cathedral Hill's heritage, increase the vitality and accessibility of Cathedral Hill to the direct and larger community, while providing flexibility and opportunities for all to shape the cultural, social, and physical future of the site. The project team welcomes the opportunity for collaboration and partnerships throughout this rezoning process to achieve an iconic public space for the City for generations to come.