

June 12th, 2019

Revised September 13th, 2019

Revised October 19th, 2020

City of Victoria
No.1 Centennial Square
Victoria BC
V8W 1P6

Attn.: Mayor & Council

Re: 1475 Fort Street Development Permit Application

Cascadia Architects is pleased to submit this Development Permit application for 1475 Fort Street on behalf of Lantern Properties Ltd. (the 'Applicant') for the construction of a four-storey 32 unit rental apartment building. The details of the proposal described in this application carefully respond to the relevant OCP Design Guidelines, Development Permit Area Design Guidelines, and its existing R3-AM-2 zone. In preparing this application, the design team has received preliminary input from City planning and engineering staff, and specialist consultants including a certified arborist and civil and geotechnical engineers.

The consultation and review process to date include the following meetings:

- *Consultation Meeting with City of Victoria (October 30, 2018)*
- Introductory Meeting with Fire Prevention Officer (April 09, 2019)
- Pre-Planning Meeting City of Victoria (*April 24, 2019*)
- Open House with local neighbours (*April 24, 2019*)
- A review of preliminary height and setbacks with residents of 1030 St Charles St. (May 30, 2019)
- Meeting with the Rockland Neighbourhood Association (June 10, 2019)
- *Presentation to Advisory Design Panel (January 22, 2020)*
- *Meeting with local neighbours (March 5, 2020)*
- *Committee of the Whole (May 28, 2020)*
- *Zoom Webinar meeting with local neighbours (September 9, 2020)*



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Description of the Proposal:

The 1475 Fort Street parcel is 1500 sq.m in total area and is currently occupied by a 3 storey apartment building and associated at grade parking structure, both of which are deemed to be nearing the end of their life cycles. It is a panhandle lot as defined by the City of Victoria, and has a panhandle driveway which accesses Fort Street along the east property line of 1471 Fort, a property also owned by the Applicant.

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A Corporate Partnership
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The existing building on the site is currently leased to the Vancouver Island Health Authority, and as such the tenant assistance policy is not applicable to this redevelopment.

The current zoning of the site is R3-AM-2 – up to 4 storeys and 1.6:1 allowable FSR. It is located within the Development Permit Area 7B (HC): Heritage Corridor and is designated 'urban residential' in the Official Community Plan. The proposal is located in the Rockland neighbourhood.

The site itself is relatively flat, however, it sits significantly lower than the adjacent 949 Pemberton Road townhouses located to the south, and Frewing Lane to the southwest. There are a wide range of mature trees on and surrounding the site, and a service right of way from Fort Street to the Pemberton Road townhouses along the east property line.

The property is characterized primarily by its unique panhandle shape, which effectively pulls the building away from the Fort Street corridor, recessing it behind the 1471 Fort Street 4 storey apartment building and nestling it into the surrounding Rockland neighbourhood, an eclectic mix of townhouses, multi unit residential dwellings and single family homes.

Project Benefits and Amenities:

This project will bring 32 new units of rental housing stock to the City. The proposal will add much needed rental housing to the Rockland neighbourhood, and will enhance the quality of the public realm along the Fort Street corridor via the quality of its design, materials, and detailing.

Design and development guidelines:

The building reflects the intent of the current zoning, with a height of 4 storeys, underground resident parking, and a density (FSR) of 1.42:1. It takes its massing and material finish cues from the historic character of the neighbourhood, which provides the fundamental design concept that drives the project. This proposal strives to bridge between its historic context and a modern future for the Fort Street corridor, avoiding a pastiche or imitation of the past, but carefully referencing it through material selection and organization of massing on site. This approach is in keeping with the Rockland Neighbourhood Plan, providing strong architectural design that is compatible in character and quality with the Rockland environment.

The building is simple and uncomplicated and utilizes a refined material palette of light and dark brick, metal panels, aluminum pickets, and perforated screens. The base of the building is clad in dark brick, grounding it and visually reducing the building's mass. The second to fourth storeys are characterized by a clear hierarchy of materials, with strong horizontal and vertical light brick banding surrounding inset dark brick, and grey vertically oriented metal panels. These metal panels are matched in finish to a projecting roof overhang at the fourth storey and above the entrance to the underground parkade at the northeast corner of the building and the entrance to the site.

The entrance is set back from the face of the building, providing visual interest oriented towards Fort Street, and softened with cedar soffits. Dark green aluminum planters surround the building, punctuating the landscaping and providing textural contrast to the building itself, adding a further feature of visual interest. Perforated metal screens create a higher filigree of architectural expression to the balconies and provide some privacy screening between the proposal and the neighbouring sites.

The building draws on historical inspiration in a site specific response to achieve an elegant and timeless expression. It is comprised of high-quality exterior finishes which are durable and capable of weathering gracefully on all four facades, to the qualitative benefit of the public realm along the Fort Street corridor as well as the sightlines from adjacent residences. The design complements the mature landscaping and historic architectural character of the Rockland neighbourhood.

The primary design initiatives which reference the **Official Community Plan** can be summarized as follows:

- This proposal contributes a meaningful amount of in-fill rental housing stock within walking distance of services, amenities, and the City's downtown core.
- By placing new residential density in direct proximity to transit routes, and within cycling distance of downtown, new development can increase transportation choice and relieve vehicle dependence.
- The project seeks to enhance the sense of the neighbourhood's unique identity. The Rockland neighbourhood is characterized in many areas by atypical lots and variegated relationships between buildings and streets. The articulated façade treatment and contrasting colours and textures incorporated into the building's design create depth and visual interest from a distance, accentuating the lot's unique configuration and the orientation of the building upon it.
- This proposal introduces five ground oriented units, improving the contextual relationship between the building and the historic residential neighbourhood with ample ground oriented housing in which it is situated, elevating the pedestrian experience of the site.
- As a rental residential development, this proposal provides long term stable rental housing in the City of Victoria, upgrading and regenerating the city's existing rental housing stock, and encouraging a mix of new residents and a socio-economically inclusive community.

Additionally, the project responds to several relevant priorities laid out in **Development Permit Area 7B (HC): Heritage Corridor (Fort Street)**

- Fort Street is a corridor with the capacity for the intensification of multi unit residential development. The site is currently being utilized in a multi unit residential capacity. Through increased floor area and an additional fourth storey, this use is intensified in keeping with DPA 7B and OCP guidelines.
- Intensified multi-unit residential use in this location will promote pedestrian and bicycle use along Fort Street.
- Through thoughtful design and high-quality, durable building materials, this proposal supports the revitalization of Fort Street, and provides a sensitive response to its historic context, enhancing visual interest along the arterial.
- The exterior finishes and traditional massing achieve a cohesive design with the site's historic context and enhances the experience of the Fort Street corridor.

The proposal also reflects the following tenets of the referenced **Downtown Core Area Plan** guidelines:

- Due to its unique panhandle lot configuration, the building is not directly physically connected to the Fort Street frontage. The entrance to the building is oriented to the northeast corner of the site, visually connecting it to Fort Street and improving the building's relationship to the sidewalk.
- The grade difference between the site and its adjacent southern neighbours effectively reduces the impact of its height, and provides a sensitive transition between the R3-AM-2 and the R1-A zone as well as the Urban Residential and Traditional Residential Urban Place Designations moving away from Fort Street and into the Rockland residential area.

- The second storey cantilevers over the main level entrance, creating a continuous covered area along the street frontage and providing residents and users of the site with continuous shelter from the rain and other elements.
- The expression of the roof over the parkade ramp and lobby entrance distinguishes the entrance from the rest of the building, while the lobby entrance itself is recessed, providing visual articulation to the street facing north frontage of the building.
- A bike storage room, with generous glazing, is located next to the lobby and can be accessed from the outdoor by a separate entrance and ramp. The same ramp will act as the accessible entrance to the elevator lobby and can be used for moving days.

Transportation and Infrastructure:

The project is well situated and fully serviced by City of Victoria infrastructure. Schools, parks and recreation facilities are all located within walking distance of the site. In addition, the nearby work and shopping opportunities available both downtown and in the Stadacona Village, Oak Bay Avenue Village, Jubilee Village, and North Park Village make this site suitable for an increased population density. This population will be well serviced with regard to transportation options, including immediate proximity to major Transit routes on Fort Street and Pandora Avenue as well as vehicle and bicycle parking and storage provisions.

The project will include 24 resident and 2 visitor underground parking stalls accessed from the driveway at the northeast corner of the body of the panhandle lot.

The long term bicycle parking spaces have been separated into two designated and secure bicycle rooms, one adjacent to the lobby at grade, and the other located in the underground parkade. The required 6 short term bicycle parking spaces are placed at the entrance to the building, semi protected from the elements by a projecting overhang, and screened by a raised feature planter.

Design Revisions Following Community Consultation:

In response to concerns expressed by neighbours through the community consultation process, the following efforts have been made to mitigate the impact of the building to the surrounding Rockland neighbourhood. The size and number of perforated metal screens associated with the proposal's balconies have been increased and they have been relocated specifically to reduce sightlines between the balconies and the adjacent properties to the south and southeast of the proposal. Additionally, the exiting has been reconfigured at the main floor level, allowing for the removal of the exterior path in the rear yard of the building and the introduction of robust planters for maximized landscape screening to the south. Finally, the floor to floor heights of the above ground floor levels have been reduced by 150mm per floor and the parapet height has been minimized, dropping the total height of the proposal by 0.87m, reducing the impact of its massing on the immediate neighbours.

Green Building Features:

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

- Exterior materials are highly durable, and detailing will suit life-span management of components.
- Solar Ready Conduit from Electrical Room to roof.
- LED lighting throughout.
- Low-VOC paint in all interior areas.

- Low-flow plumbing fixtures used throughout all units.
- Secure, heated bike storage at parkade and main level.
- Rough-in electrical for future electric bicycle charging locations within bicycle storage.
- Rough-in electrical for future electric vehicle charging stations.
- *Rough-in conduit to roof for future photo-voltaics.*
- Heat Recovery Ventilation for the building.
- High efficient centralized domestic hot water boiler system.
- Meeting the BC Energy Step Code level 3 requirements.

In preparing this development permit application package the team has carefully considered community concerns, the relevant OCP objectives, and the Development Permit Area Design Guidelines. The design proposes an elegant and timeless architecture that responds to the unique character of the location. We believe that it will add to the strength and character of the Fort Street corridor and the Rockland neighbourhood, and we look forward to presenting this project to Council. If you have any questions or require further clarification of any part of this application, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

CASCADIA ARCHITECTS INC.



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Principal