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April 29, 2022

District of Central Saanich
1903 Mt Newton Cross Rd,
Saanichton, BC V8M 2A9

Attention: Planning Department



To whom it may concern,

Re: 7701 East Saanich Road – redevelopment rationale for rezoning and development permit application

We have been the owners of 7701 East Saanich Road for the past 2 years only. Our company principally owns, manages, and develops rental apartment buildings for the long term, and we are not merchant developers who sell once property is built. We are Victoria based but our group also operates in Nanaimo, Parksville, Campbell River and Duncan.

The current buildings at 7701 East Saanich are best described as a 1980 built 10-unit rental townhouse complex, which were built cheaply and not well maintained by prior owners.

In our first year as owners, we discovered a few serious maintenance issues in the buildings:

- the buildings have Poly-B plumbing lines throughout. Poly-B plastic plumbing lines were used for a period in the 1970s and 1980s, but it was banned after it was discovered it can spontaneously burst after 15 years or so. All the townhouses have this Damocles Sword hanging over them well past the typical age of failure of this plumbing. While we've completed a few small repairs, re-piping townhouses would require evicting the tenants, something we have not wished to do during the pandemic.
- the exterior wall construction is only 2x4 stud construction with 3.5 inches of insulation so has much lower insulating value than newer 2x6 stud construction with 5.5-inch cavities for insulation. Residents face high heating bills due to this poor insulation that is very difficult to remediate.
- The exterior decks have been poorly maintained by previous owners and are at the end of their life.
- The exterior chimneys for older propane fireplaces need major remediation as they are a source of water infiltration currently.



CASTERA PROPERTIES

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- Slab-on-grade construction on main floor with no insulation beneath the concrete slab means the ground floor is always cold and thus very energy inefficient. There was even some sort of vine growing through gaps in the concrete foundation and floor into a unit which had to be sealed last year.

Some of these issues were noted when the property was inspected prior to purchase and individually are not major issues. Taken as whole, they are proof the buildings are near their end of life, beyond salvage and of poor construction quality.

Meanwhile over the past 2 years we've familiarized ourselves with the Central Saanich OCP and Saanichton plan.

We believe that redeveloping the property into a new higher density rental development fits the goals of the OCP of higher density in the Saanichton core for the following reasons:

- Proposed building would have reduced energy use when compared to the current townhouses as a new development would meet Step 3 energy code which would result in a much lower energy use residents for each housing unit compared to the current inefficient townhouses.
- Proposed building would still cater to larger households as it would have 9 Three bedroom or Three bedroom + den units, a number similar to the existing 10 Three-bedroom townhouses which would be demolished. Current units are around 1300 square feet and some of the new units would be around 1700 square feet in size.
- The proposed development would offer diverse housing options, with six bachelor apartments, 27 one-bedroom units, 19 two-bedroom units in addition to the nine 3-bedroom townhouses.
- The proposed building would have up to 9 adaptable units, something the current 2 level townhouses do not offer.
- Proposed building is only 4 storeys in high and closer to Saanichton than the 5 storey Prosser Road project approved a few years ago so a more acceptable density in a residential area.
- The property is already zoned multi-family with townhouses to the north and south. There are single family homes across the road only and ALR land to the east.
- Greener living and transportation due to:
 - o proposed building would offer electrical car chargers, something the current building cannot offer with only 125 amps per unit and not enough capacity for more than 1 or 2 EV car chargers for 10 townhouses.
 - o Proposed building would offer 61 rental apartments 400 meters from Shoppers Drug Mart in Saanichton versus only 10 currently.
 - o On the #75 bus route and 400 meters to Saanichton bus exchange – increased transit use with 61 vs 10 current housing units able to use transit.
- It will give more housing options for Central Saanich residents wishing to downsize in their community and near services.

Lastly, on a more macro level, our group owns and manages newer rental buildings in Langford, where we have residents commuting daily to Sidney and airport for work. We find this very inefficient so we would love to be able to offer a new rental option on the peninsula for renters.



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In conclusion, we believe the proposed project should be approved as it brings “gentle density” due to its 4 storeys, the parking is mostly underground, it is in the Saanichton core, and it fits within Central Saanich’s OCP for the Saanichton area.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Castera Properties Inc.

Nicolas Denux
President