



ROCKLAND NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

February 2, 2009

**Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1P6**

Dear Mayor Fortin and Council,

Re: 1082 Richmond Avenue – Development Permit #000147

We have reviewed the application for the demolition of 1082 Richmond Avenue Apartments-Development Permit #000147 submitted by Dez Bazett of Vic Davies Architect Ltd. on December 5th, 2008.

Not the least of our concerns is the replacement of rental units by strata-title condominiums. We find the support of rental demolition to be counter-productive to Council's aim of increasing affordable housing (by granting subsidies for secondary suites, for example). Rental accommodation is allegedly protected by the City's Strata Conversion policy in a time of low rental vacancy. Further, we understand that a bylaw preventing demolition of rental properties during low vacancy periods is currently under review.

"Richmond Court Apartments", the original University school built in 1905, was converted into rental apartments in 1972. This historic schoolhouse, with "its Italianate-style characteristics, hipped roof, bay windows with tall sashes, and brackets under the eaves" (Geoffrey Castle), is an example of our city's "heritage character" which should be "conserved, maintained, and enhanced." (Rockland Neighbourhood Plan 2.3.1) Moreover, it hardly seems environmentally sound to tear down a "well-built" (Castle) character house, considering the quality of its materials and workmanship.

It should also be noted that the massive chestnut tree in the southeast corner of the property would be vulnerable to loss by the blasting and construction of the condominium development.

We appreciate the sensitivity shown by Abstract developments to integrate this proposal in the transition area along Oak Bay Avenue; however, we regret a loss of rental accommodation and the loss of one of Victoria's historic buildings.

**Sincerely,
Janet Simpson, Vice President
Rockland Neighbourhood Association
Cc Tom Pebernat**

