



**CITY OF VICTORIA
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

**HYBRID MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS & XWSEPSUM NATION ROOM
1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE**

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and Xwsepsum Nation

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Marc Showers (Chair); Tamara Bonnemaïson; Julie Brown; Joseph Gowid (virtual); Kavita Srinivasan; Nicholas Standeven; and Kristina Zalite

OTHERS PRESENT: Katie McEvoy (HAPL-ADP Cross-Appointee) (virtual)

PANEL MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Hornell and Priscilla Samuel

STAFF PRESENT: Charlotte Wain – Manager - Neighbourhood Development Planning; Miko Betanzo – Senior Planner, Urban Design (virtual); Geordie Gordon – Senior Planner (virtual); Kristal Stevenot – Senior Heritage Planner (virtual); and Alicia Ferguson – Recording Secretary

APPLICANT ATTENDEES: Heather Spinney, Praxis Architects Inc. (virtual); Alec Rossa, Parish/Ukrainian-Canadian Cultural Society (virtual); Father Yuriy Parish, Ukrainian Catholic Church of St. Nicholas (virtual); Julia Kupriova; Les

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

Panel Members and staff provided introductions.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held December 11, 2024

Moved By: J. Brown

Seconded By: T. Bonnemaïson

That the Minutes from the meeting held December 11, 2024 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Minutes from the Orientation meeting held January 25, 2025

Moved By: M. Showers

Seconded By: N. Standeven

That the Minutes from the meeting held January 25, 2025 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved By: M. Showers

Seconded By: J. Brown

That the February 26, 2025 Advisory Design Panel Agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Applications

Rezoning Application No. 00884, Development Permit No. 000647, and Heritage Alteration Permit No. 00267 for 1909 Cook Street and 1110 & 1112 Caledonia Avenue

Geordie Gordon, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking input on including:

- proposed new buildings relationship with Caledonia Avenue and Cook Street
- impact of the removal of the heritage dwelling
- setbacks
- building layout design
- provision of open site space
- any other aspects of the proposal on which the ADP chooses to comment.

Heather Spinney, Praxis Architects and Alec Rossa, Parish/Ukrainian-Canadian Cultural Society (Applicants), presented an overview of the application detailing the rationale for the proposal, including the arson incident necessitating this rebuild proposal.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- *Clarity on the proposed access to the lower units and porch placements.*
 - *Balconies overhang on some units. Detailed stair access and window placement shown on the site plan.*
- *Fire Department access and turnaround clarification.*
 - *Similar to any townhouse, likely not accessing the site but utilizing the street.*
- *Design decision for two buildings rather than one.*
 - *Originally, one row of townhouses was proposed but following discussions with staff, it was determined that the development should be divided into two blocks to address window separation requirements along the Cook Street frontage.*
 - *Balance of providing more daylight to lower units while keeping overall scale in mind and allowing the church to be dominant on site. Noting the design as a*

typical model, making use of the lower ground, partially below grade, with a small step.

- *Parking and infill on the existing northerly parking lot and the proposed vehicle access decision.*
 - *City transportation as requiring vehicle access to be off Caledonia Avenue.*
- *Anticipated ground use for the northerly yard of Building B.*
 - *The design prioritizes orienting public and outdoor spaces toward the south and central areas to foster a sense of community, incorporating plazas and courtyards. The northern yard will remain shaded by existing trees, which are being preserved by shifting the buildings further south. Due to the site's elevation, balconies are not proposed on the north side.*
- *Rationale for the proposed parking numbers.*
 - *Requesting a variance of 4 parking stalls. Balance of providing adequate parking with more green space. Preference to remove more parking but working with the client to ensure functionality.*
- *Rail car lines as part of the history of the site and whether those could be incorporated into the parking lot design.*
 - *To be discussed with the team's heritage consultant.*
- *Details on the complexities of the rebuild or relocation of the church due to the easement and heritage status associated with the site.*
 - *Permitting and insurance impacts resulting from the easement and heritage status leading to delays with the proposal and hopes to move forward with removing some associated heritage restrictions.*
- *Commending the landscape architect for the native planting and natural landscape strategy, including clarification on the proposed Garry Oak meadow habitat and maintenance plan.*
 - *Staff clarified that maintenance plans are not part of the City's jurisdiction with the application but that the proposed landscaping is aligned with the policy.*
- *Impact of the existing tree on the neighboring site overlooking the proposed east-facing windows.*
 - *To be discussed further with the landscape architect and design team.*
- *Placement of the trees along the parking lot.*
 - *Proposed to be more of a lower shrub planting but will discuss more screening options with the landscape architect.*
- *Rationale for the proposed plank wall near the Cook Street façade stairs that go up from the sidewalk.*
 - *Potential for further design tweaks, perhaps a dividing wall between the two units and a small window on either side.*
- *Flow of building access in relation to the public realm.*
 - *Four accesses: First two off Caledonia Avenue, then there is an accessible ramp and elevator access on the right side, as well as basement access near the greenspace tree.*

The public portion of the meeting closed at 1:12 p.m.

Panel members discussed the following:

- *Generous application in design; Cook Street frontage landscape needs more thought*

- for navigating to the front door. A more direct connection to Cook Street is preferred.*
- *Paired entry due to internal stairs could be pulled apart to identify two separate accesses on Building A and appreciation of the paired entrance with more street connection.*
 - *Design considerations to adjust the long building face along on Cook Street.*
 - *Eliminating north-south walkway in front of the houses or creating a larger terrace if possible.*
 - *Refining the circulation and grading; potential for ramp-accessible front door for lower units and eliminating steps on Cook Street.*
 - *Improving the public realm by extending the curb line bump out to encompass the driveway and increase greenspace to highlight the heritage building.*
 - *Shifting design focus to highlight Caledonia Avenue and the church.*
 - *Working in commemorative elements towards the church and utilizing heavier landscape screening near the parking lot.*
 - *Utilizing pavers strategically to delineate the walkway, such as asphalt with visual indicators for pedestrians.*
 - *Options, such as rotating parking spots, to create a zone for landscaping, allowing for additional parking near the eastern side and careful programming of the parking lot.*
 - *Incorporating more windows along the street frontage to increase activation.*
 - *Reconfiguring parking and moving the sign back to allow the setback to be more in line with the neighboring heritage house.*
 - *Incorporating the heritage street car lines on the site into the design somehow.*
 - *Improving the circulation of the buildings and the parking lot through further design refinements.*
 - *Reconsideration of the grading of the buildings, highlighting benefits of grading changes on the sewer pump and site servicing.*
 - *Achieving an improved parking circulation by pulling up the ground floor allowing for greater window allowances while also increasing livability of some units.*
 - *Reconsideration of balcony placements to alleviate overlook concerns and highlighting that raising the building may increase overlook concerns due to the setbacks.*
 - *Highlighted the efforts to retain several trees providing a buffer for the overlook.*
 - *The ornate detailing and architectural elements on the Cook Street elevation should reflect a more traditional character—such as enhanced window casings, belly bands, and textured or grained materials—that subtly reference historical styles while maintaining a modern interpretation*
 - *Consider refining the proposed designs to match the heritage building for better alignment with the architectural character and scale of the surrounding buildings.*
 - *Incorporate surface-level landscaping elements that reflect the site's heritage character—such as historically inspired materials or patterns—and consider dedicating space for a small park or symbolic feature to honor the site's historical significance.*
 - *Incorporating some outdoor surface treatments to allow for a small children's play area.*
 - *Reconsidering the configuration challenges particularly the north-facing balconies near or at tree height.*
 - *Reconsidering the two-building strategy, particularly the design shift of the end unit, and whether splitting the massing is necessary to activate Cook Street and whether a single-building approach could offer more usable outdoor space in a linear*

- configuration, though it may not significantly improve parking.*
- *Re-evaluating the benefits of the two-building design, detailing that the east side of Building A and the west side of Building B present challenges in terms of access to light and openness—greater separation or reconfiguration could improve these conditions. Additionally, alignment with Step Code requirements should be considered, especially in relation to building orientation and massing.*
 - *Exploring design allowances that address the problematic in-between space without requiring the removal of a unit, specifically the corner lot configuration presents unique challenges that may require creative spatial solutions.*
 - *Considering a more subtle treatment of the east-facing openings to minimize potential overlook impacts.*
 - *If relocating the building further north is not feasible, considering strategies to activate the remaining modern space and exploring design solutions to make the most of the constrained layout and avoid losing functional or aesthetic value.*
 - *Consider enhancing the southern frontage with additional landscape plantings by removing some parking spaces to create more room for a greener, more pedestrian-friendly streetscape.*

Moved By: T. Bonnemaïson

Seconded By: N. Standeven

That Advisory Design Panel recommends to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000647 for 1909 Cook Street and 1110 & 1112 Caledonia Avenue be approved with the following changes:

- Raise building to reduce duplicated walkways, to improve the access to lower units, to improve the connection of units to north area, and to improve site servicing.
- Further detail parking lot to provide more landscape setback from Caledonia Avenue, and to include surfacing that allows for play, robust interpretive signage, or a place for gathering.
- Consider adding trees on east property line.
- Consider a singular building footprint with a strong entry presence on Cook Street to improve onsite outdoor space and/or setbacks and building efficiency and circulation.

T. Bonnemaïson left the meeting at 2:09 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Adjournment

The February 26, 2025 Advisory Design Panel meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.