



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

August 11, 2026

**VIRTUAL MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE**

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

PANEL MEMBERS PRESENT: Alissa Wrean (Chair), Steve Barber, Jana Stefan, Valerie Lindholm, Katie McEvoy, Rosemary Sleigh, Veronika (Nikki) Strong-Boag; and Liberty Brears

PANEL MEMBERS ABSENT: Ben Clinton- Baker

STAFF PRESENT: Miko Betanzo – Senior Planner
Laura Saretsky – Heritage Planner
Kamryn Allen – Recording Secretary

APPLICANTIONS: **A. Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit No.00317 for 2 Cook Street**

ATTENDEES: Sidney Reist (Senior Planner, Capital Programs – City of Victoria), Edward Westerhuis (Liaison, Arts, Culture & Events – City of Victoria), Ammar Mahimwalla (Senior Cultural Planner – City of Victoria), Jesse Campbell (Campbell Visual Arts)

B. Rezoning Application No. 00911 and Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street and 901-919 Gordon Street

Mark Whitehead (Partner, Architect AIBC, MCM), Gillian Brennen (Architect AIBC, MCM), Grant Brumpton (Landscape Architect, PWL), Jonathan Tinney (Principal, Planning, Policy & Process, SNV), Geoff Heu, (Client Senior Vice President Development, GWL), Michael Reed (Client, Vice President Development, GWL)

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Panel Members and staff provided introductions.

R. Sleigh, L. Brears, and S. Barber were not present at the start of the meeting.

2. Approval of Agenda

Moved By: J. Stefan

Seconded By: K. McEvoy

That the August 11, 2026 Heritage Advisory Panel Agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held March 10, 2026, and July 14, 2026

Moved By: K. McEvoy

Seconded By: J. Stefan

That the Minutes from the meetings held March 20, 2026, and July 14, 2026 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

R. Sleigh joined the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

4. Applications

A) Delegated Heritage Alteration Permit No.00317 for 2 Cook Street

Laura Saretsky provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking feedback on.

Applicant team provided an overview of the project and provided a presentation.

L. Brears joined the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

S. Barber joined the meeting at 12:17 p.m.

- No minutes were taken for this delegated application

B) Rezoning Application No. 00911 and Development Permit with Variances Application No. 00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street and 901-919 Gordon Street

Laura Saretsky, Heritage Planner provided an overview of the application and highlighted the areas that staff are seeking feedback on.

Applicant team provided an overview of the project and provided a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- The glazed brick looks great, and the green will be wonderful. Interested to know more about the exterior façade on page 21 of the plans.
 - I think that is a take on how this was rendered. The green brick is certainly brighter than what's shown.
- I want to know about the murals, where are they, how many?
 - There will be just the one facing Courtney Street, on top of the building.
- Hoping the mural can connect to our province and nature.
 - I think we will really look into this and do something similar to the murals on the Belmont building.
- The design principles emphasize reinforcing the existing character and human scale, while this proposal departs from the height and scale envisioned for the area. How should we balance those heritage and design objectives with the need for additional housing, particularly when the plaza is intended to help mitigate the impact? Is the plaza enough to offset the increased height?
 - Having worked in Victoria since the mid-90s and designed several buildings, I think this proposal strikes a good balance between density and heritage sensitivity. The plaza creates space around the heritage building, while the materials, rhythm, and proportions fit well with the surrounding context. Overall, I think the building works well from both the plaza and Laurel Point views.
 - *M. Betanzo, Senior Planner responded:* I echo some of Mark's comments. The key challenge is balancing the increased height with heritage sensitivity. The plaza significantly improves the relationship with St. Andrews, and the building responds well in the broader context, particularly from across the water. While the height is greater than typically seen in Old Town, the benefits to this key heritage building help offset that impact.
- It is a challenge when you stretch the policy. Given its proximity to other significant-height buildings in the area, such as the Belmont and the newer Bentall building, I think this area of Old Town could accommodate a little more height than, say, the Chinatown area. I think it is well situated to accommodate a bit more height.
- St. Andrews Kirk Hall wall, what does this look like? Is it a new build or an existing wall? If so, how does that wall relate to the other two sides of the plaza area, specifically the wall on the south?
 - The purpose is to cover the common wall of the adjacent building as an improvement. The church itself is brick, while the proposed building is glazed green brick. The materials will be high quality, but we do not have a solution to show you at this time. It is to be built as part of the development.
- Question to staff: The guidelines specifically emphasize human scale and low-scale development. While the report identifies step-backs and façade articulation as measures to mitigate the additional height, does staff consider these sufficient to meet the human-scale policy objectives?

- *M. Betanzo, Senior Planner responded:* Human scale is typically understood as approximately 6-8 storeys. While the step-backs help reduce the perceived height, a 12-storey building does not fully meet the human-scale objective. However, the building's context, pedestrian experience, and other policy objectives must also be considered, making this a balance between competing objectives.
- I don't disapprove of the proposal; a lot of thought and effort has gone into it. My main concern is the maintenance and security of the public spaces. With the trees and landscaping providing shelter, how will the design address potential security issues and protect both tenants and the proposed plaza?
 - GWL has owned and managed the site for many years and is committed to maintaining the same level of property management and security. Active management, natural surveillance, and activity from the surrounding restaurants, patios, and mixed uses will help create a safe and vibrant public space.

Panel members discussed:

- There is a lot of glass on the building, which makes it look very modern. Particularly at the ground level, which makes sense for retail, but above, in the penthouses, there seems to be a lot of glass, which takes away from the Heritage character.
- It's a strong and thoughtful application, and the plaza, materials, and overall design fit well within the urban context. The main concern is the proposed height and density, which are roughly double what the guidelines permit. While we recognize the site is in an area of Old Town with taller buildings and that some additional height may be justified, doubling the permitted height is significant.
- Concerned about the impact on the established three to four storey character of Old Town, the human scale, and the precedent this could set for future developments. The concern is less with the quality of the design and more with the cumulative impact of approving such a significant departure from the guidelines.
- There is an integrity to Old Town that is very precious and rare, and it is defined by its human scale. This is clearly outlined in the Old Town Design Guidelines.
- The proposal references taller buildings on the other side of town, but does not acknowledge the two small, designated Heritage buildings, which are three and four storeys, directly across the road. I really think that if we are going to maintain Old Town as a special, beautiful, and human-scaled place, this building is too high.

Moved By: R. Sleigh

Seconded By: N. Strong-Boag

Motion: That the Heritage Advisory Panel recommends to Council that Rezoning Application No.00911 and Development Permit with Variances Application No.00307 for 617-635 Broughton Street and 901-919 Gordon does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and policies and should be declined and that the key areas that should be revised include:

- Whereas the proposal does not meet the current density and height limits and in particular does not respect the character defining element that states a varied range of low to mid-scale building heights generally ranging from 3-5 storeys as stated in section 5.1 of the Design Guidelines.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5. Adjournment

Moved By: L. Brears

Seconded By: V. Lindholm

The August 11, 2026 Heritage Advisory Panel meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY