



**CITY OF VICTORIA
ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 28, 2026**

**HYBRID MEETING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS & Xwsepsum Nations 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); Julie Brown; Nicholas Standeven;
Tamar Bonnemaïson; Mark Hornell; Kristina Zalite; Joseph
Gowid; Priscilla Samuel; Jarren Butterworth

STAFF PRESENT: Caner Oktem – Senior Planner, Urban Design
Rob Bateman – Senior Planner
Matt Kuziak – Planner
Kamryn Allen – Recording Secretary

**APPLICANTIONS:
ATTENDEES:** **A) Development Permit with Variance(s) No.00280
for 235 Russell Street**

Charles Kierulf (Architect AIBC), Fraser McColl (Owner),
Dan Robbins (Owner)

**B) Development Permit Application No.000625 for
475 Kingston Street**

Shaun McIntyre (Architect AIBC), Paul Merrick (Retired
Architect AIBC), Bijan Neyestani (Owner), Fred Rohani
(Owner), Alpha Project Developments

1. Call to Order

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

Panel Members and staff provided introductions.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the meeting held:

December 9, 2025

Moved By: J. Brown

Seconded By: M. Showers

That the Minutes from the meeting held December 9, 2025 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Approval of Agenda

That the January 28, 2026 Advisory Design Panel Agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

4. Applications

A) Development Permit with Variance(s) Application No.00280 for 235 Russell Street

Matt Kuziak (Planner) provided an overview of the application.

Charles Kierulf provided an overview of the project and provided a presentation.

N. Standeven joined the meeting at 12:10

M. Showers recused from 235 Russell Street Application due to business relationship

M. Hornell acting chair for the first application: Development Permit with Variance(s) Application No.00280 for 235 Russell Street.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- If the applicant is unable to meet the road dedication requirements, is there an alternative process that would allow them to proceed?
 - Staff: Road dedication is now a standard requirement for most development projects, depending on the existing right-of-way width. Russell Street has been identified as needing future upgrades to meet the City's mobility objectives, which may include elements such as expanded boulevards, landscaping, or additional space for trees, not necessarily bike lanes. Transportation has an identified cross-section for each right-of-way in the city. As a result, road dedication may be required at the rezoning stage through a condition of the motion before Council, or it may be required later at the building permit stage by the Engineering Department.
- If there is no way to avoid the road dedication, what changes might the project team need to consider?
 - Staff: It has been an ongoing discussing with the project team for several years. Adjustments were made in coordination with Engineering and City staff, including moving the curb line further from the building to widen the sidewalk and create more space in front of the building. A 1.7m Statutory Right-of-Way was requested for the original DPV00163, approved in 2021. This was not provided but the application was still supported. Five years later, with a different application, the goals for the Right-of-Way have changed and the mobility and urban forestry goals can be met with a ROW width of 15.9m. Therefore, Staff have reduced the required road dedication ask to 0.64m from 235 Russell Street to support the

application. This dedication area will be taken at Building Permit. This dedication area remains absent from the plans.

- Has engineering specified what exactly they need the 0.64 meters for on that cross section?
 - The exact infrastructure proposed is not yet known, but it will likely involve adjustments to the curb and gutter, as well as space for the boulevard and landscaping. Road dedication typically depends on whether the existing right-of-way meets the City's standard for that street classification. While the Development Permit (DP) stage is when these details are formally reviewed, applicants are advised early to plan for these requirements.
- Looking at the civil drawings, are these the civil designs being proposed for this project? Can you confirm?
 - The other information is included because the team has been working on the project for a long time. The civil plan was originally developed for the building permit but has been updated for this resubmission, so it is current.
- It might help the application package to show the trees and boulevard going in.
- Did the previously approved design include the 0.64-meter road dedication you mentioned?
 - No, the previous design did not include the 0.64-meter dedication; it had a slightly larger dedication at the time. As staff mentioned, the current road dedication is smaller, and the site was already quite constrained.
- If this project does not proceed and the site reverts to the previous fully industrial building proposal, would the City receive any road dedication?
 - Yes.
- Regarding the extent and location of the industrial use, the staff report notes that policy prefers it on Level 1. Could staff explain the intent behind this, and could the applicant explain why the industrial use is proposed on Level 2?
 - Staff: The intent of the policy is to create an active streetscape while maximizing feasible industrial space in the neighborhood. Placing industrial uses at grade improves accessibility from the street. While everyone prefers industrial uses at grade, the team is balancing this with the need to provide vehicle parking.
- Are you able to describe what measures are in place to connect L1 to L2?
 - On the north side, the rendering shows the residential lobby with an elevator and exit stair. On the south side, there's a secondary entrance that provides stair access to all floors. At the back, a service elevator goes only to Level 2 for industrial use. The industrial space has a dedicated freight elevator and ground-floor shipping/receiving area. The main lobby serves both residential and industrial uses, with controlled access via fobs.
- The drawings note an F3 occupancy, likely for determining rated assembly separations. Could you clarify what types of industrial uses this would include?

- The industrial use would be classified as an F3 occupancy, or light industrial. It's similar to a maker space, where small-scale production occurs, such as 3D printing or creating small products. There will be no large presses or noisy equipment. The use is consistent with the small-scale light industrial operations seen in strata units in the West Shore.
- When shifting to residential use, did you consider adding typical residential features, such as landscaping in front of the lobby or shared open spaces?
 - Landscaping has been added to all balconies and terraces, including ornamental trees, drawing inspiration from the nearby Biscuit Factory. There is limited space in front of the building for soft landscaping, but this is acceptable given the potential for a boulevard along the street. Hard surfaces up to the building are appropriate and desirable, as small planting areas often fail due to lack of sunlight and water. The team also plans to include benches along the sidewalk.
- Why can't the building be pushed back?
 - Every millimeter of the building's footprint is critical. Moving the front of the building back would result in losing at least two parking spaces. While there may be other impacts, the site is very tightly constrained. Parking remains important, both for the residential and industrial uses, so any adjustments require trade-offs, like squeezing one element means another must give.
- What strategy is in place to maintain the landscaping since its one of the main features?
 - Currently, there is no manual for maintaining the plantings. The building will likely be managed by a rental company, so some maintenance procedures may be implemented in the future.
- Has there been any consideration of making the rooftop accessible for shared amenity space?
 - Rooftop access has been discussed, but there are challenges, including additional stories and cost. Many projects are no longer providing balconies, and in this case, balconies offer residents private outdoor space while providing the best aesthetic treatment for the upper storeys.
- The green roof plan shows some extensive plantings. Could you explain the purpose of this, and is it necessary given the small area?
 - Fully covering the green roof would be expensive, so a compromise was made to plant approximately half of it. The final layout will be determined during detailed design, likely filling one end or extending along the south side where it works best.
- Have you explored any materials like brick tiles or wall veneers at least for the first 2 floors?
 - The intent is not to simply mimic existing materials. While corrugated metal is used on the side of the building, weathered steel may not be included. Overall, the goal is to create a connection between materials without using brick.
- Have you explored having a corner plaza between the factory building and this building?

- There is some space between the building and the Biscuit Factory, approximately 8 to 9 feet, but it is close to the property line. Any openings on that side would need to be fire-protected, as the building is effectively at a zero-lot line.
- Has there been any consideration of measures to prevent loitering or undesirable uses in these areas, and how will they be separated from the street?
 - The intent is to create a visually open, well-lit, and clean space. High pedestrian activity is expected to naturally discourage undesirable use. The team prefers not to use security bars and aims to maintain the canopy and benches to support a welcoming environment.
- No residential parking
- Commercial parking and loading zone, is the height designed for a loading area?
 - No large delivery trucks, such as Gordon Food Services trucks, are expected. The space is designed primarily for transit vans.
- You mentioned the rooftop is solar-ready. Does this include the conduit to the electrical panel, and is the DC-to-AC inverter panel installed, or not yet?
 - None of that is installed yet. The building has a large electrical room with a conduit (EMT takeoff) in place to allow a solar panel to be connected in the future.
- Was there any particular reason why the solar is not being installed at the outset?
 - Cost has been a major factor. When the project began, solar was expensive, but prices have dropped significantly. This may allow the building to move from being just solar-ready to actually having solar installed, potentially by the time the building permit process is complete.
- Regarding the reference to the Biscuit Factory and its heritage value: While it may have historical relevance, the building is not heritage-designated nor on the Heritage Register. How has the City recognized the heritage values of this building?
 - Heritage recognition of the building comes solely from the City's heritage staff identifying its value and intent to potentially designate or register it in the future. Notable heritage elements include the north-facing Ormond's Biscuits ghost sign and various architectural details. There is no formal heritage designation at this time.
- And under the previous application, was the painted sign on the building visible or would it have been obscured by the building that was previously approved?
 - The previously approved proposal included a zero setback from the south property line. The current proposal is the same. The previous proposal was 14.5m in height. The current proposal is 19.8m in height. The impact to the adjacent heritage value is expected to be similar. Important to note, the original application was for a DPV that fit within the M-1 Zone. A Rezoning to M1-R was completed to permit additional uses. The current Rezoning and Development Permit application provides increased opportunity to improve the design, relationship to the street, and relationship to neighbouring buildings.
- Question to staff: Does the factory currently have any use like is it used for anything or is closed?

- The factory is currently used as a warehouse for storage.

Panel members discussed:

- The issues identified by staff resonate with the Panel.
- The mix of uses is interesting, but there are several challenges. The building's relationship to the street is not appropriate for residential use, with few opportunities for natural surveillance. Many residential units lack bedroom windows, and long hallways reduce efficiency and livability. There is no shared amenity space, and landscaping is minimal despite some planters.
- Fitting multiple uses into such a tight site is challenging, and the previous plan offered no housing or amenities. While the current building is imperfect, it provides residential units, which is preferable to none. There are always trade-offs, but an awkward, mixed-use building on this small lot is better than leaving the site as a warehouse.
- Building on previous comments, the mix of uses is interesting, and the vertical circulation with a dedicated freight elevator helps address challenges of combining residential and F3-occupancy uses. Despite technical challenges, this proposal is a significant improvement over the approved design, particularly with generous private balconies compared to the small outdoor spaces in nearby developments. The road dedication issue should be addressed promptly, but the project has merit and could be further improved by slightly reducing parking and considering staff's recommendations.
- The new proposal appears inspired by the residential development across the street. A mixed-use building at this location may work, given the surrounding context. However, there are valid staff comments that should be addressed to improve the project.
- Disagreement with the view that this proposal is better than a warehouse: Introducing residential in this industrial area may dilute its industrial function. The proposed residential units are not ideal, and the project could result in a less functional industrial space compared to retaining a warehouse.
- Support for the proposal: It reads as an industrial-loft style development, similar to arts-based live-work spaces in Mount Pleasant and Vancouver. The generous balconies help offset the long hallways. The site context, with residential infill and a townhouse project across the street, supports this mix. Some units appear livable, and there is likely a market for them. With nearby public amenities, the proposal is an improvement over the previously approved building and does not worsen the situation.

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 00280 for 235 Russell Street does not sufficiently meet the applicable design guidelines and polices and should be declined.

Moved By: J. Brown

Seconded By: T. Bonnemaïson

Kristina Zalite abstained

For: J. Brown, T. Bonnemaïson,

Opposed: M. Hornell, I, P. Samuel, N. Standeven, J. Gowid, and J. Butterworth

DEFEATED

Motion: That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000280 for 235 Russell Street be approved with the following changes:

- Resolving the dedication on Russell, that the City of Victoria has requested
- Consideration for a common amenity for the residential use
- Considerations for security and safety best practices at the front entrance ground plane
- Resolving the Transport Canada height limitation (OLS) constraints on the proposal
- Consideration for improving livability by introducing natural light and air to units
- Consideration to adjust massing to improve livability.
- Consider upper storey set back on the south and east façade
- Consider using warmer, earthy tone-coloured materials, on the street façade.

Moved by: P. Samuel

Second by: N. Standeven

For: N. Standeven, M. Hornell, K. Zalite, J. Gowid, P. Samuel, J. Butterworth

Opposed: J. Brown, T. Bonnemaïson

CARRIED

M. Showers back to chairing for the remainder of the meeting

B) Development Permit Application No.000625 for 475 Kingston Street

Rob Bateman Senior Planner, provided an overview of the application

Shaun Mclntyre provided an overview of the project through a presentation.

The Panel asked the following questions of clarification:

- Regarding the future path network, the applicant has proposed 0.73 m along the east side of the property, while staff is requesting 1.5 m. Is the intent for this 1.5 m to combine with a similar contribution from the adjacent property to create a 3 m-wide pathway, or should the pathway on this property be considered fully independent? What is the ultimate intended width of the path?
 - Staffs response - The pathway stems from a legal agreement requiring lanes, walkways, and courtyards open to the public. A similar agreement exists on the adjacent property at 475 Menzies, and together they are intended to form a continuous network. Staff's position is that a path must be provided on this property regardless of the neighboring site's development. The schematic shows the network running along the south and west sides of 475 Menzies, with future connections through the current site, which now has a parking lot. Accessibility guidelines recommend 1.5 m minimum, but a preferred width is 3 m for both pedestrians and cyclists, with an additional 0.6 m on either side for landscaping, totaling 4.2 m ideally. The exact width may vary depending on the site design, such as the inclusion of courtyards or sitting areas
- All of these pathways are based on concepts from previous years, and no final designs currently exist, correct?

- Staff response - Yes, on the adjacent property the network is still conceptual. At this time, we are only seeking a functional strip of pathway along the side of this property.
- Commendation on the building: It fits well in James Bay, reflecting heritage considerations and the firm's design contributions. Regarding the pathway, the design already provides a functional path and small courtyard, meeting most physical requirements. At this point, the issue seems more about principle rather than design.
 - Its challenging, applying existing guidelines while considering both past design legacy and future development. The pathway issue highlights this tension. While the covenant requires a 1.5 m path, staff suggested 4.2 m, which was impractical given site constraints and the uncertain future of the adjacent property. The project team is capable of designing a public pathway, but the current approach reflects practical limitations. Ultimately, decisions on this matter are for Council. The focus here should remain on design panel comments and the building itself.
- Staff's response - a pathway network is anticipated on the adjacent site in the future, as outlined in the legal agreements on both properties. The current proposal should accommodate a functional portion of that network.
- If the project is approved with the 0.7 m+ statutory right-of-way, what would occupy that zone in the absence of any changes on the adjacent 400-block site? Would it be gravel, soft landscaping, or something else?
 - If no pathway were required, almost nothing would change. The dog-walk area would be moved 0.73 m to provide additional outdoor space for residents. Conceptually, a public pathway would include a 3 m-wide path with trees and shrubs on both sides. On this property, the 0.73 m zone above the concrete parkade ceiling could accommodate the first row of trees forming half of a landscaped screen for the pathway.
- Assuming a pathway is never installed in the future, but the 0.7 m+ zone is granted, what would occupy that zone?
 - Nothing specific is determined for the zone, but the team would make it as visually appealing as possible and is open to suggestions.
- Will there be a grade difference between the onsite private pathway and the future public pathway?
 - Yes, there is a grade differential. In the 0.73 m zone, the grade matches the adjacent site as best as possible. The dog walk and outdoor landscaping rise above the parkade ceiling, so the grade increases toward the back of the site.
- I think the graphic on L2 drawing L2 shows that edge condition.
- The staff report notes that the front yard setbacks are relatively small for a residential context. While the street wall is appreciated for enhancing the pedestrian experience, there are concerns that the cupola may detract from views of the Legislative domes. Is the top-floor element a bedroom skylight, or is it the proposed cupola/dome?
 - The element is not intended to reference or imitate adjacent buildings. It is a distinct architectural feature that naturally completes the building's classical design and is not influenced by neighbouring developments. Given the distance

from surrounding sites, there are no heritage impact concerns. The design team considered both a skylight and a cupola, however, a cupola was preferred as it relates to the building as a whole rather than serving a single unit and avoids introducing unnecessary contemporary elements.

- What is inside the cupola. Is it a void?
 - At this stage, the element is currently void. As the project moves into detailed design and working drawings, there may be opportunities for consultants to introduce elements within that space.
- The cupola does not have a domed ceiling for the unit below, correct?
 - No.
- Have options been explored to better integrate the outdoor common areas with the building, as they currently appear somewhat secluded and fenced off from the indoor amenity spaces?
 - The landscape plan illustrates that the primary outdoor circulation includes a dog walk, which also functions as service access, with a small seating area adjacent to it. The only true common outdoor amenity is a shared residents' garden, which is accessed from Main Street. Based on past experience and discussions with the client, shared ground-level outdoor amenity spaces tend to be underutilized unless located on rooftops. As a result, the design prioritizes private outdoor spaces associated with individual units, such as screened patios, rather than larger shared areas. The limited size of the common outdoor amenity space reflects this design choice.
- What about the Kingston street 1.5 meter set back and if you did look at shifting the building back to make a bigger entrance?
 - The building was originally designed in 2021, prior to the adoption of the new OCP and before the site was included in the Downtown Core Area Plan. At that time, the applicable precinct zoning permitted a zero-metre setback. The design intentionally introduced a 1.5-metre setback to create a street interface zone, where none was required. Additional setbacks are provided at the main building entrance and along the side facing the 430 Menzies site. The design team did not explore increasing the front setback beyond 1.5 metres, as it was considered sufficient given the original zoning context. While a larger front area could potentially improve the project, the design prioritizes smaller setbacks along the north-facing street edge, where limited light and smaller units make large outdoor spaces less effective. The proposal does not comply with current Downtown guidelines, as those guidelines were not in place at the time of design.
- Staff comments reference the potential use of partially recessed balconies to enhance the overall architectural expression. Have these been explored as part of the design?
 - Yes, partially recessed balconies were explored earlier in the design process. Initial iterations included larger front-facing balconies of varying sizes, which were later reduced. Given the building's thick exterior wall assembly, the design team chose not to further recess balconies beyond the wall thickness, as additional inset depth would reduce already limited living space in the smaller, north-facing

units. The decision balanced potential balcony depth against interior livability, particularly on the darker side of the building.

- Could you explain the façade modulation at the upper levels of the north elevation, including the mansard roof expression and any dimensional setbacks as the building steps back?
 - The building is designed to read as a five-storey form at the street edge, emphasized by a strong upper cornice. The mansard roof is set back at the sixth level so that, from most viewpoints, the eye reads the building as visually recessed without a significant loss of floor area. Along the north façade, small outdoor patios are provided for lower units, while at the upper levels these patios are expressed as openings within the mansard roof. At the sixth level, smaller units have two modest patios rather than one larger space, and at the level above, additional small patios are created within the angled roof. These areas are intended primarily for light use, such as planting, with functional access directly from the units.
- What is the solid wall shown on the south side adjacent to the opposing properties backing onto the Kew Court project, and what is its purpose given the indicated 2.6-metre height?
 - The wall forms part of the landscape podium and includes a fence along the rear property line. Taller planting is proposed behind the fence to provide visual screening for adjacent residents, with landscaping intended to be more visually appealing than the existing parking area they currently face. The fence is proposed to define the property edge; however, the design team is open to alternative approaches, including using planting alone, and is receptive to further suggestions.

Panel members discussed:

- The upper-storey setbacks were viewed as effective and sufficient, with no need for further reduction of building mass. The 1.5-metre front setback was considered appropriate for the building type and contributes to a generous street interface. While inset balconies can provide weather protection, they may limit light; projecting balconies on the north façade were seen as beneficial for maximizing daylight. The cupola was understood as a design feature and was not considered to interfere with views of the Legislative domes. Overall, the project was supported and considered ready to proceed as proposed.
- Regarding the north street frontage: Projecting balconies' extension off of the set-back building face was found to be functionally acceptable.
- Concerns were raised about the functionality of some north-facing private balconies and whether residents may instead rely on shared outdoor amenity space. It was noted that the common outdoor area appears disconnected from the building, and clarification was sought on whether it could be better integrated with the interior amenity space, which is currently located adjacent to the parkade ramp.
- Regarding north-facing balconies, it was noted that they function more like Juliet balconies, providing light and ventilation rather than usable outdoor space. A slightly larger street setback could offer opportunities for planting, but this was not considered necessary. The south-facing private outdoor spaces were praised for their light,

orientation, and landscaping, including the Belvedere and secret garden over the parking ramp, which were seen as successful. The common outdoor area was described as primarily a circulation or transitional space rather than for social gatherings, but it provides a pleasant entry toward private patios. Overall, the project was recognized for its thoughtful response to site boundaries, its articulated massing, the mansard roof design, and the generous interior daylighting, resulting in a sophisticated and well-considered building.

- The south-facing private outdoor spaces were noted as particularly compelling and likely to be well used. The north setback was considered acceptable, though a minor increase (e.g., 0.5 m) could allow for a small planting strip in front of the brick wall without compromising the quality of the south-facing spaces.
- The proposed path was discussed, with the view that providing it could create a welcoming, publicly accessible amenity and help foster community interaction, such as a gathering space or small features like a Free Library. The north-facing balconies were noted as unlikely to be heavily used, and while the rationale for not recessing them was understood from a building envelope perspective, it was suggested that Juliet-style balconies might be sufficient and could better preserve the building's aesthetic. Overall, the architecture was viewed as successful.
- It was noted that the outdoor space in question represents a missed opportunity. From a design perspective, the space should be connected to a pathway or the building to avoid underutilization.
- While the 1.5 m front setback was initially a concern, it was noted that slightly increasing it could help. The use of high-quality materials along the street edge was seen as mitigating and enhancing the overall presentation.
- If no path is provided on the property, it was suggested that the edge of the parkade, which protrudes due to sloping topography, be enhanced with landscaping or design treatment (e.g., a reveal pattern in the concrete) rather than leaving it as plain damp proofing and backfill, to improve its visual interface with the adjacent surface parking lot.

Motion That the Advisory Design Panel recommend to Council that Development Permit Application No. 000625 for 475 Kingston Street be approved as presented.

Moved By: M. Hornell

Seconded By: T. Bonnemaïson

Opposed M. Showers

CARRIED

5. Adjournment

The January 28, 2026 Advisory Design Panel meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.